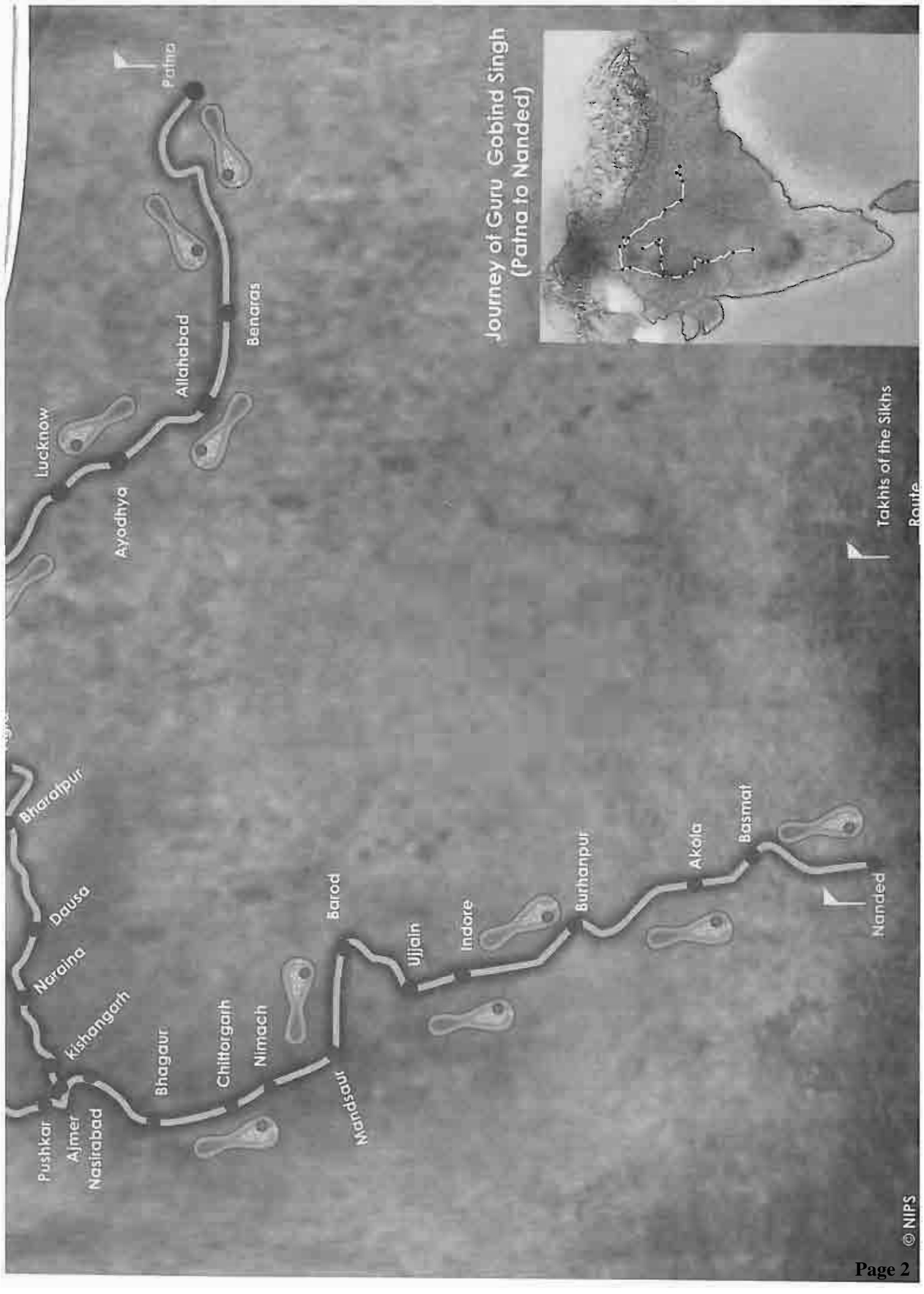


IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF

Guru

GOBIND SINGH

DR. J. S. NEKI



Journey of Guru Gobind Singh (Patna to Nanded)

Takhts of the Sikhs
Route

ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ
ਜੀ

Nishan of Guru Gobind Singh from his own prayer book with the Bagrian family
Courtesy: Jujhar Singh Bagrian

Following Pages: Baisakhi 1699. Painting by Kanwar Singh Dhillon.

Guru
GOBIND SINGH





HIMACHAL HILLS

in association with

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF PANJAB STUDIES

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF

Guru GOBIND SINGH



Dr. J.S. Neki



On the tercentenary of the Gurgaddi of Guru Granth Sahib, a replica of the *Kalgi* of Guru Gobind Singh was specially handcrafted by Beverly Hills jeweller, Angelo Castelo with a distinctive modern flair. The piece is cast in gold, set with blue topaz and diamonds on silver base. This was presented to the Takhat Sri Hazur Sahib by the American followers of Yogi Harbhajan Singh. Courtesy: Dr. Indrajit Kaur

FOREWORD

We are singularly fortunate that we had the privilege of celebrating some of the important events of Sikh history in our own lifetime. After celebrating the tercentenary of the birth of Guru Gobind Singh in 1966, the quincentenary of the birth of Guru Nanak Dev in 1969, and the tercentenary of the creation of the Khalsa in 1999, we celebrated the quadricentenary of the installation of the Adi Granth in the holy precincts of Sri Darbar Sahib in 2004. Currently we are celebrating the tercentenary of the Gurgaddi Divas of Guru Granth Sahib and Parlok Gaman of Guru Gobind Singh.


During the tercentenary celebrations of the birth of the Khalsa in 1999, our Institute took up a major research project on "Locating, Cataloguing and Photographing Relics of the Sikh Gurus and other Historic Personalities". In the course of our fieldwork, we were able to get photographs of some rare relics in different parts of India, Pakistan and the United Kingdom. With a view to sharing the result of our research with the larger audience and creating awareness for the preservation of this endangered heritage, we published eight pictorial books under the Panjab Heritage Series in 2002-2004. Some of these books have become immensely popular and have gone into several editions. During the quadricentenary celebration of the installation of Guru Granth Sahib in the Harimandir Sahib at Amritsar in 2004, our Institute took up another major project on "Locating, Cataloguing and Digitising rare Guru Granth Sahib Birs".

To mark the tercentenary of the *Gurgaddi Divas of Guru Granth Sahib* and *Parlok Gaman* of Guru Gobind Singh, our Institute has decided to bring out a set of four pictorial books dealing with different themes relevant to Guru Granth Sahib and Guru Gobind Singh. We have already published two pictorial books - *Guru Granth Sahib: The Guru Eternal* and *Takht Hazur Sahib: Journey into Eternity* by Dr. Mohinder Singh. We now bring out this book *In The Footsteps of Guru Gobind Singh*. While the text has been written by Dr. J.S. Neki, eminent Sikh scholar, Mr. Sondeep Shankar, S. Malkiat Singh and others have provided photographs for the volume. Mr. Kanwar Dhillon has been very supportive and permitted us to use photograph of the artwork from his precious collection.

The Institute would like to acknowledge its gratitude to the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee, Amritsar; Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Management Committee, Delhi; Takht Sri Harimandir Sahib, Patna; Takht Sri Hazur Sahib, Nanded and other institutes and individuals who have permitted us to use pictures of the Gurdwaras and their collections. We are also grateful to Prof. Bipan Chandra, Prof. B.N. Goswami, Prof. P. S. Kapur, Dr. Amrit Basra and other scholars, for their advice and support to the project.

I would also like to record my appreciation for Dr. Mohinder Singh, Director of the Institute and his team of scholars for their input to the project.

National Institute of Panjab Studies
New Delhi


(Amrik Singh)
Chairman

MESSAGE

FROM

SINGH SAHIB GIANI GURBACHAN SINGH, JATHEDAR, SRI AKAL TAKHAT, AMRITSAR



ਗਿਆਨੀ ਗੁਰਬਚਨ ਸਿੰਘ
ਜਥੇਦਾਰ

ੴ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਕੀ ਫਤਹ॥



ਸ੍ਰੀ ਅਕਾਲ ਤਖ਼ਤ ਸਾਹਿਬ
ਸ੍ਰੀ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਸਰ

ਮਿਤੀ 13-10-2008

ਸ਼ਲਾਘਾਯੋਗ ਉਪਰਾਲਾ

ਅਸੀਂ ਵਡਭਾਗੀ ਹਾਂ ਕਿ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੇ ਜੀਵਨ ਕਾਲ ਵਿਚ ਸਿੱਖ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਦੇ ਕੁਝ ਮਹਾਨ ਦਿਹਾੜੇ ਮਨਾਉਣ ਦਾ ਸੁਭਾਗ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਹੋਇਆ ਹੈ। 1966 'ਚ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਤੀਜੀ ਜਨਮ ਸ਼ਤਾਬਦੀ, 1969 'ਚ ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਦੇ ਬਾਨੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਪੰਜਵੀਂ ਜਨਮ ਸ਼ਤਾਬਦੀ, 1999 'ਚ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਸਿਰਜਨਾ ਦੀ ਤੀਜੀ ਸ਼ਤਾਬਦੀ ਅਤੇ 2004 'ਚ ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਹਰਿਮੰਦਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ 'ਚ ਪਹਿਲੇ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ ਦੀ ਚੌਥੀ ਸ਼ਤਾਬਦੀ ਦੇਸ਼ ਤੇ ਦੇਸ਼ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਹਰ ਸਿੱਖ ਸੰਗਤਾਂ ਨੇ ਬੜੇ ਉਤਸ਼ਾਹ ਅਤੇ ਸ਼ਰਧਾ ਨਾਲ ਮਨਾਈ।

ਬਾਬਾਣੀਆਂ ਕਹਾਣੀਆਂ ਪੁਤ ਸਪੁਤ ਕਰੇਨਿ॥

ਕਹਿੰਦੇ ਹਨ ਕਿ ਸੰਸਾਰ 'ਚ ਉਹੀ ਧਰਮ ਫਲਦੇ ਤੇ ਫੁਲਦੇ ਹਨ ਜੋ ਆਪਣੇ ਵਿਰਸੇ ਨਾਲ ਜੁੜੇ ਰਹਿਣ ਤੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਗੌਰਵਮਈ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਨੂੰ ਸੰਭਾਲ ਕੇ ਰਖਣ। ਪਿਛਲੇ 500 ਸਾਲਾਂ ਦੌਰਾਨ ਸਿੱਖ ਕੌਮ ਨੇ ਬੜੇ ਉਤਾਰ-ਚੜ੍ਹਾਉ ਵੇਖੇ ਹਨ ਪਰ ਅਕਾਲ ਪੁਰਖ ਦੀ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਨਾਲ ਹਰ ਮੁਸ਼ਕਿਲ ਦਾ ਸਾਹਮਣਾ ਕਰਦਿਆਂ ਚੜ੍ਹਦੀ ਕਲਾ 'ਚ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ।

ਅਸਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਜਾਣ ਕੇ ਅਤਿਅੰਤ ਪ੍ਰਸੰਤਾ ਹੋਈ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਪਾਵਨ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਜੀ ਦਾ ਗੁਰਤਾ-ਗੱਦੀ ਦਿਵਸ ਵੱਡੇ ਪੈਮਾਨੇ 'ਤੇ ਮਨਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਭਾਰਤ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਨੇ ਇਕ ਉੱਚ ਪੱਧਰੀ ਕਮੇਟੀ ਕਾਇਮ ਕੀਤੀ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਯਾਦਗਾਰੀ ਪੁਰਬ ਨੂੰ ਸਮਰਪਿਤ ਦੇਸ਼ਾਂ-ਵਿਦੇਸ਼ਾਂ 'ਚ ਹਰ ਥਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਹਰ ਸ਼ਹਿਰ ਅਤੇ ਕਸਬੇ 'ਚ ਸੰਗਤਾਂ ਵਲੋਂ ਪਾਵਨ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਗੁਰਤਾ-ਗੱਦੀ ਨੂੰ ਸਮਰਪਿਤ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਪ੍ਰੋਗਰਾਮ ਵਧ ਚੜ੍ਹ ਕੇ ਕੀਤੇ ਗਏ ਹਨ ਅਤੇ ਸੰਗਤਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਗੁਰਤਾ-ਗੱਦੀ ਸ਼ਤਾਬਦੀ ਨੂੰ ਮਨਾਉਣ ਦਾ ਹਰ ਥਾਂ ਭਰਪੂਰ ਉਤਸ਼ਾਹ ਵੇਖਣ ਨੂੰ ਮਿਲਿਆ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਸੰਬੰਧ ਵਿਚ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਵਲੋਂ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਜੀਵਨ ਯਾਤ੍ਰਾ ਅਤੇ ਪਰਲੋਕ ਗਮਨ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਬੰਧਿਤ ਸ਼ਹਿਰਾਂ, ਅਨੰਦਪੁਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ, ਦਮਦਮਾ ਸਾਹਿਬ (ਤਲਵੰਡੀ ਸਾਬੋ) ਅਤੇ ਨਾਂਦੇੜ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦਾ ਬਹੁਤ ਵਿਕਾਸ ਹੋਇਆ ਹੈ।

ਸਾਡੇ ਲਈ ਇਹ ਬੜੇ ਮਾਣ ਦੀ ਗੱਲ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਗੁਰਤਾ-ਗੱਦੀ ਦਿਵਸ ਅਤੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਪਰਲੋਕ ਗਮਨ ਦੇ 300 ਸਾਲਾ ਸਬੰਧ ਵਿਚ ਨੈਸ਼ਨਲ ਇੰਸਟੀਚਿਊਟ ਆਫ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਸਟੱਡੀਜ਼ ਨੇ ਸਚਿੱਤਰ ਪੁਸਤਕਾਂ ਛਾਪਣ ਦਾ ਸ਼ਲਾਘਾਯੋਗ ਉਪਰਾਲਾ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੈ। ਸਿੱਖ ਵਿਦਵਾਨ ਡਾ. ਜਸਵੰਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇਕੀ ਨੇ *In the Footsteps of Guru Gobind Singh* ਇਕ ਸਚਿੱਤਰ ਪੁਸਤਕ ਤਿਆਰ ਕੀਤੀ ਹੈ। ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਮਹਾਨ ਸੰਦੇਸ਼ ਅਤੇ ਵਿਰਸੇ ਨੂੰ ਦਰਸਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਡਾ. ਮਹਿੰਦਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਦੇਸ਼ਾਂ-ਵਿਦੇਸ਼ਾਂ 'ਚ ਉਪਲਬਧ ਪਾਵਨ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਦੁਰਲਭ ਅਤੇ ਪੁਰਾਤਨ ਸਰੂਪਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਤਸਵੀਰਾਂ, ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬਾਨ ਦੇ ਹੁਕਮਨਾਮੇ, ਪਵਿੱਤਰ ਨਿਸ਼ਾਨੀਆਂ ਅਤੇ ਗੁਰਧਾਮਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਦੁਰਲਭ ਤਸਵੀਰਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਸ਼ੁਸ਼ੋਭਿਤ ਇਕ ਸਚਿੱਤਰ ਪੁਸਤਕ *Guru Granth Sahib: The Guru Eternal* ਤਿਆਰ ਕਰਨ ਦਾ ਸ਼ਲਾਘਾਯੋਗ ਉਪਰਾਲਾ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੈ। ਦੇਸ਼ਾਂ-ਵਿਦੇਸ਼ਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਤਖ਼ਤ ਸੱਚਖੰਡ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਹਜ਼ੂਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਵਿਖੇ ਆਉਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਸ਼ਰਧਾਲੂਆਂ ਦੀ ਸਹੂਲਤ ਲਈ ਤਖ਼ਤ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਹਜ਼ੂਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਤੇ ਨਾਂਦੇੜ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਵਿਖੇ ਹੋਰ ਇਤਿਹਾਸਕ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਿਆਂ ਬਾਰੇ ਤਖ਼ਤ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਹਜ਼ੂਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧਕੀ ਕਮੇਟੀ ਦੇ ਸਹਿਯੋਗ ਨਾਲ ਇਕ ਸਚਿੱਤਰ ਪੁਸਤਕ *Takhat Sri Hazur Sahib: Journey Into Eternity* ਵੀ ਤਿਆਰ ਕੀਤੀ ਹੈ।

ਮੈਨੂੰ ਆਸ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਇਹ ਸਚਿੱਤਰ ਪੁਸਤਕਾਂ ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦੇ ਮਹਾਨ ਸੰਦੇਸ਼ ਅਤੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਫ਼ਲਸਫੇ ਨੂੰ ਦੇਸ਼ ਅਤੇ ਵਿਦੇਸ਼ 'ਚ ਬੈਠੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਨਾਮ ਲੇਵਾ ਤਕ ਪਹੁੰਚਾਣ 'ਚ ਅਹਿਮ ਯੋਗਦਾਨ ਪਾਉਣਗੀਆਂ ਅਤੇ ਅਸਾਡੀ ਨਵੀਂ ਪਨੀਰੀ ਲਈ ਪ੍ਰੇਰਣਾ ਸਰੋਤ ਸਾਬਤ ਹੋਣਗੀਆਂ।

ਗੁਰੂ ਰਾਖਾ ।

ਗੁਰੂ ਪੰਥ ਦਾ ਦਾਸ

(Signature)

(ਗਿਆਨੀ ਗੁਰਬਚਨ ਸਿੰਘ)
ਜਥੇਦਾਰ



Guru Gobind Singh

This is the story of a stalwart among religious leaders of the world who was not only imbued with unremitting love of God but also with an undaunted struggle against social injustice. He was the creator of an Order of God's Knights-at-arms, the *Khalsa*, known for its unflinching valour, uncompromising moral rectitude and savour for martyrdom.

His resolute faith, courage of conviction, exquisiteness of his verse, upright morality, universal justice, principled diplomacy, unexceptional humanism and non-exclusivist religiosity have invariably impressed his biographers - whether Hindu, Muslim or any other. Above all, he impressed them as the builder of a nation whose *Chardhi kala* (spiritual optimism) and spirit of sacrifice stands unparalleled. There is hardly a historian who has not been impelled to make his obeisance to Guru Gobind Singh's multilateral genius.

"His dreams and deeds wrought a wonderful change in his own generation in the religious, martial and political life of -people. His personality was so fascinating, so bewitching, so dynamic, so momentous and so unforgeable that we are seized with wonder at the changes which took place in Panjab within one year and a half of his death. He was the greatest genius of his age. Whenever we touch the short life, (as he died at the age of forty two) we are at once brought into contact with a live wire. He was luminous like the sun, and has conquered death." (Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, vol. 1 p.224). He possessed a rare combination of many excellences - marvellous intellect, sublime ardour, strong will-power, superb zeal for sacrifice, generous heart, and unlimited energy.

Bulleh Shah, a Muslim saint of Panjab, contemporary of Guru Gobind Singh, paid glowing tribute to the Guru in these words:

"I neither talk of the past, nor of the future



The Mystery Unravelled

The moment child Gobind Rai was born in Patna, Pir Bhikhan Shah offered his prayers facing the East instead of the West, i.e. towards Mecca. He left for Patna soon after. On arrival at the Guru's residence, the Pir placed two bowls full of candy before the divine infant. The Divine

Being put both his hands over the two bowls thus signifying his patronage to both the Hindu and Muslim communities.



I speak of the time of our contemporary, Guru Gobind Singh, and proclaim openly that but for that Guru, all the Hindus would have been converted to a foreign culture and religion." Even in his young age, he was moved by the suffering that he witnessed around him. He was particularly pained to see men in bonds of slavery. He decided that he shall help them find freedom and dignity; that they shall live with their heads held up and with death-defying courage.

Childhood Ministry at Patna

Guru Tegh Bahadur, the ninth Guru, and father of Guru Gobind Singh, was ever reluctant to seek public attention or recognition. This reluctance however came to be valued much by people and they chose to turn to him in spite of the rival efforts of his kinsmen. One of them even organized an attempt on the Guru's life, providentially, though, he escaped. The Guru therefore resorted to a rather removed hill spot, Anandpur, to find peace. Even there his kinsfolk did not leave him alone. So he travelled eastward toward Assam. He along with his entourage reached Patna city, where he made a halt. This city, the old Patliputra, had been sanctified long ago by the visit of Lord Buddha. While in Patna, his wife, being in advanced pregnancy, expressed her inability to travel any further. The Guru made suitable arrangements for her confinement there, and himself moved on toward Assam, stopping on the way at such places as had been visited by Guru Nanak. He was still in Dacca when the news of the birth of his son in Patna (on December 26, 1666) reached him.

There was great rejoicing in Patna at the birth of this child who had a charming appearance with a face haloed by joyous innocence, and limbs beauteous, yet vivacious. He drew the attention of everyone.

In Panjab, in the village of Ghuram, Bhikhan Shah, a Muslim fakir, made obeisance towards the East on the auspicious day this child was born. Doing this, he made his disciples wonder, for it was his customary practice to make obeisance only towards Ka'ba in the West. To dispel their surprise, he told them

that a great soul had taken birth in the East, and he had bowed to him. Then, he along with a few disciples of his, chose to travel to Patna to have the celestial glimpse of that child. He took along two bowlfuls of candy which he offered the child. The child put his hands over both of them as if blessing them together. Bhikhan Shah told his disciples that this gesture of the child indicated that he shall hold both Muslims and Hindus equally dear to him. This child, later, was to become Guru Gobind Singh.

As Gobind grew up, a group of playmates veered around him. Even at that young age, he would divide them into two groups and make them play mock battles, himself observing their manoeuvres, providing them instructions, encouraging them to advance forward, and appreciating their strategic moves. Himself he also became an adept shooter and his arrows seldom, if ever, missed their target.

One day, Mata Gujar, his mother, got two gold bracelets (*kangan*) made for the young Gobind. He went out with his friends to the river bank for playing. During the play, one of his bracelets fell into the river, but Gobind did not bother about it. When he went back home, his mother noticed that Gobind was wearing only one bracelet. She enquired of him, "Where is your other bracelet?" Gobind, rather casually said, "It fell into the river." "Where in the river?" the mother asked. "Come with me and I will show you where it fell," Gobind said and took his mother along to the spot where the bracelet had dropped. The mother asked him, "But how, my child, in what way, did it fall in there?" Gobind removed his other bracelet also and throwing it into the river said, "This way, dear mother!" A Gurdwara called Kangan Ghat now stands at that spot.

In Patna, there lived an honoured Pundit, Shivdat by name. He was approached by Raja Fateh Chand Maini and his queen who prayed him to grant them the boon of a son. The Pundit told them, "I am merely a Brahmin and can explain what is written in the *Vedas* and *shastras*. I do not have such a spiritual power as can grant anyone offspring. I can tell you, however, that such a soul, a 'child deity' has

already taken birth in our land. He alone has the power to grant people the desire of their heart." "But, where shall we find him?" the Raja asked. "You don't have to go anywhere to look for him. If you only remember him with love for him in your heart, he shall come to you himself." The royal couple then returned home and began to meditate daily focussing on their 'Child Deity'. One day, the queen was sitting in her courtyard almost in a trance, when a child tiptoed behind her and clasping her in his tender arms addressed her as "mother!" She was intensely thrilled to hear this long awaited mode of address. She was amazed to see Gobind standing there. Her craving for a son then simply disappeared for ever. Her house became the centre for regular meetings of the Sikh congregations. Now a historical shrine called *Maini Sangat* stands on its place.

When the Guru went home, he declared that he has come to have a second mother. Mata Gujar asked him, "How shall you amuse two mothers simultaneously?" Gobind replied, "Just as one moon shines over two pools simultaneously."

Gobind saw his father for the first time when he returned from Assam and that too for a short time only. A message from the congregations of Panjab conveyed how miserably they were missing Guru Tegh Bahadur. So the Guru departed thither. The place where

Guru Tegh Bahadur stayed became a shrine named *Badi Sangat*.

On the eve of his departure to the Panjab Guru Tegh Bahadur spoke to his wife, telling her that the city of Anandpur which he had commissioned was still in its infancy and waited to be adequately inhabited. He therefore asked her to remain in Patna and bring up Gobind Rai, their son, with adequate care. He advised her never to thwart him as 'he is the beloved servant of *Akal Purakh*, the Deathless Being'. He told her that when he grows up, he shall perform such great deeds for the world as would generate great surprise in everyone.

When Gobind Rai heard this conversation between his parents, he went to his father and said, "Father dear, I have heard that you are going to Panjab. Take me with you." The Guru replied, "You are still young and the journey to the Panjab is long and arduous. It will be too hard for you. So, stay here for some more time and I shall send for you at the right time. It is you, my son, who has to do exemplary work at Anandpur, but you have to prepare yourself for that here."

Until word came from him, the Guru's family was to remain in Patna. There Gobind learnt Gurmukhi from his mother, Mata Gujar, and started writing stylistically in that script.

Gobind Rai lived in Patna for about five



Left:
Gurdwara Kangan Ghat
is very close to Janam
Asthana on the bank
of the Ganges.

Right:
Who Called Me Mother?
The divine child Gobind
in the lap of his adopted
mother, Rani Maini.





years before he left for the Panjab in 1672. He was brought up by his mother like a prince. Arrangements had been made for him to be taught the Hindu as well as Muslim lore. Besides languages, he learnt Arithmetic and History as well by teachers of acknowledged competence. He made himself thoroughly conversant with old classics. He had a natural prowess for poetic composition, so much so that the total quantum of verse that he produced would easily fill a whole lifetime of someone else's exclusive dedication to the muse. His works bear testimony not only to his mastery of classical prosody, but also of his ability to introduce authentic innovations. His facility with words combined with the use of vigorous metres, images and symbols is simply amazing. He came to grips with fundamental questions of life and sought to understand what life really signifies. He was also trained in horsemanship and in the use of sword and spear, bow and arrow, musket and matchlock. His uncle, Kirpal, arranged a reasonable force of Sikhs for his protection and safety.

At last, the long awaited message from Guru Tegh Bahadur arrived beckoning them to

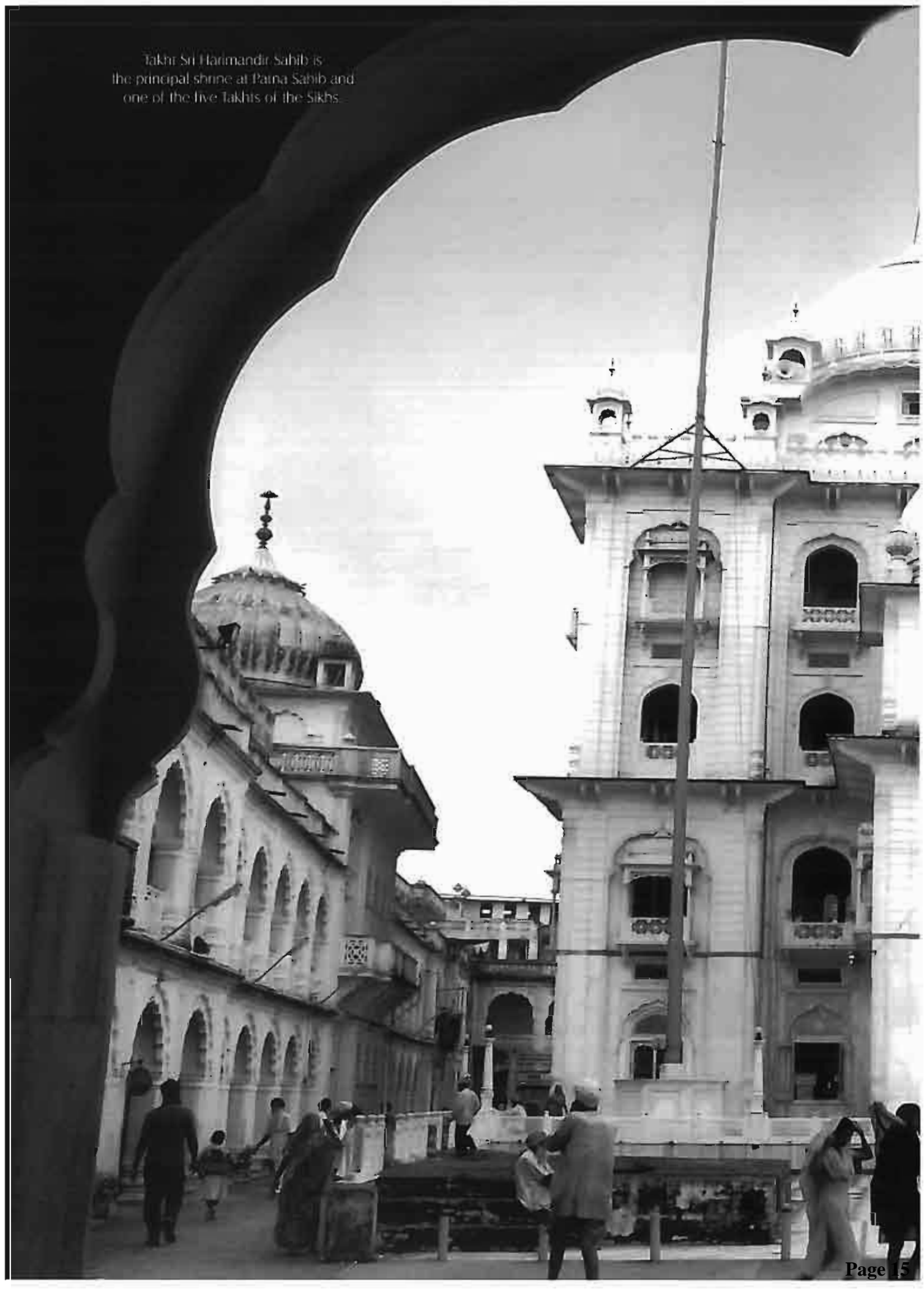
join him in Anandpur, the City of Bliss.

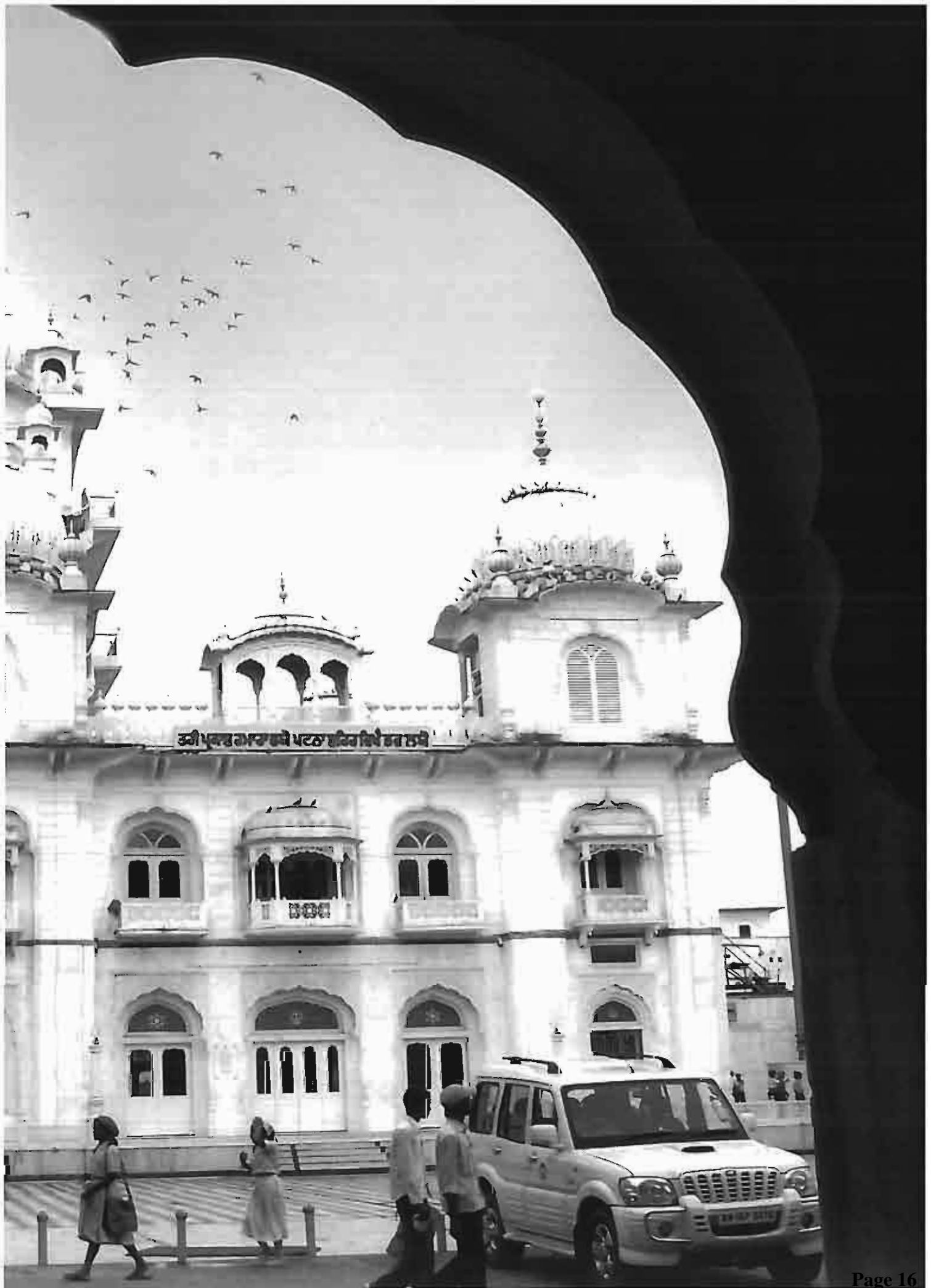
Before Gobind Rai departed from Patna, a deputation of citizens waited on him and tearfully begged of him to leave his cradle with them as a memorial. When they lamented that there would be nobody left to give them spiritual counsel, he told them that whoever would address his supplications to God Almighty with a pure mind should find his prayers duly heard by the Immortal One. All that is required is to practice obedience to the Will of the Immortal God with utmost humility. He left Patna invoking blessings for one and all the citizens of that place.

When he set out from Patna, he was given affectionate send off. Everyone there was going to miss that prodigious child. After he had left, congregations of Sikhs came to assemble at the house where Gobind was born. In the course of time, it became a *Takht*, a throne of ecclesiastical and temporal authority for the Sikhs.

All residents of Anandpur came out to receive the party with unusual festivities. Prayers of thanksgiving were held by all residents of that town.

Takht Sri Harimandir Sahib is
the principal shrine at Patna Sahib and
one of the five Takhts of the Sikhs.







Gobind was impressed by the natural landscape around there. Shivalik hills of Naina Devi were close by. The valley was lush green. It soon became his practice to roam around the hill and dale. There also, the boy Gobind practised arms, organized mock battles and went out in chase.

He did not neglect his academic growth either. He began to learn Braj which was India's *lingua franca* at that time. For Gobind Anandpur was heaven on earth and he, it seems, had the happiest times of his life there.

Guru Tegh Bahadur's Martyrdom

In those days Emperor Aurangzeb ruled the country. He was an orthodox Muslim and believed that those alone will be saved who embrace Prophet Mohammed's creed. He made all efforts to convert his subjects to that faith to make India "fit for Islam". Previously, when he was the viceroy of Gujarat, he had many a Hindu temple demolished there including the famous temple of Chintaman in Ahmedabad which he converted into a mosque. To reach the throne, he had killed his brothers and imprisoned his father. It appears, by his zealous proselytizing activity, he was trying to get reprieve for those crimes. In 1669, he issued a rescript to all his governors "to destroy with a willful hand the schools and temples of the infidels and put a full stop to their religious practices and teaching." By a royal order he forbade non-Muslims from carrying arms, and from riding elephants and horses. He imposed *jiziya*, a tax on non-believers.

The Viceroy of Kashmir, Iftikhar Khan, carried out the imperial policy more vigorously. He thought that Pundits of Kashmir were the leading Hindu scholars. If they could be converted, all others would simply follow. So he unleashed mass killings of those Pundits who would not fall in line with his proselytizing zest. Their only hope rested with the Guru at Anandpur and a deputation from them came to wait upon him to narrate their woeful story and seek his intervention to preserve the honour of their faith. Guru Tegh Bahadur was touched by the story of their suffering and was pondering over a possible solution.

At that critical moment his son Gobind, happened to come there. Seeing his father in an unusually thoughtful mood, he asked him what was weighing on his mind. Guru Tegh Bahadur said, "Freedom of faith of these Pundits, and so of all non-Muslims, is at stake. Tyrannous rulers have unleashed unmatched oppression upon them to compel them forsake the faith of their forefathers and embrace Islam. The situation requires that some highly endowed holy person should come forward to lay down his life to stem the tyranny of the despotic rulers and save the Hindus and their faith." Gobind, who was just nine then, said, "Who could be worthier than you, dear father, to undertake this noble task?" Guru Tegh Bahadur was immensely gratified to hear from his son the echo of his own thoughts. So he told the visitors to go and tell the rulers that if Tegh Bahadur is converted, they would voluntarily follow his example. And they informed the rulers accordingly.

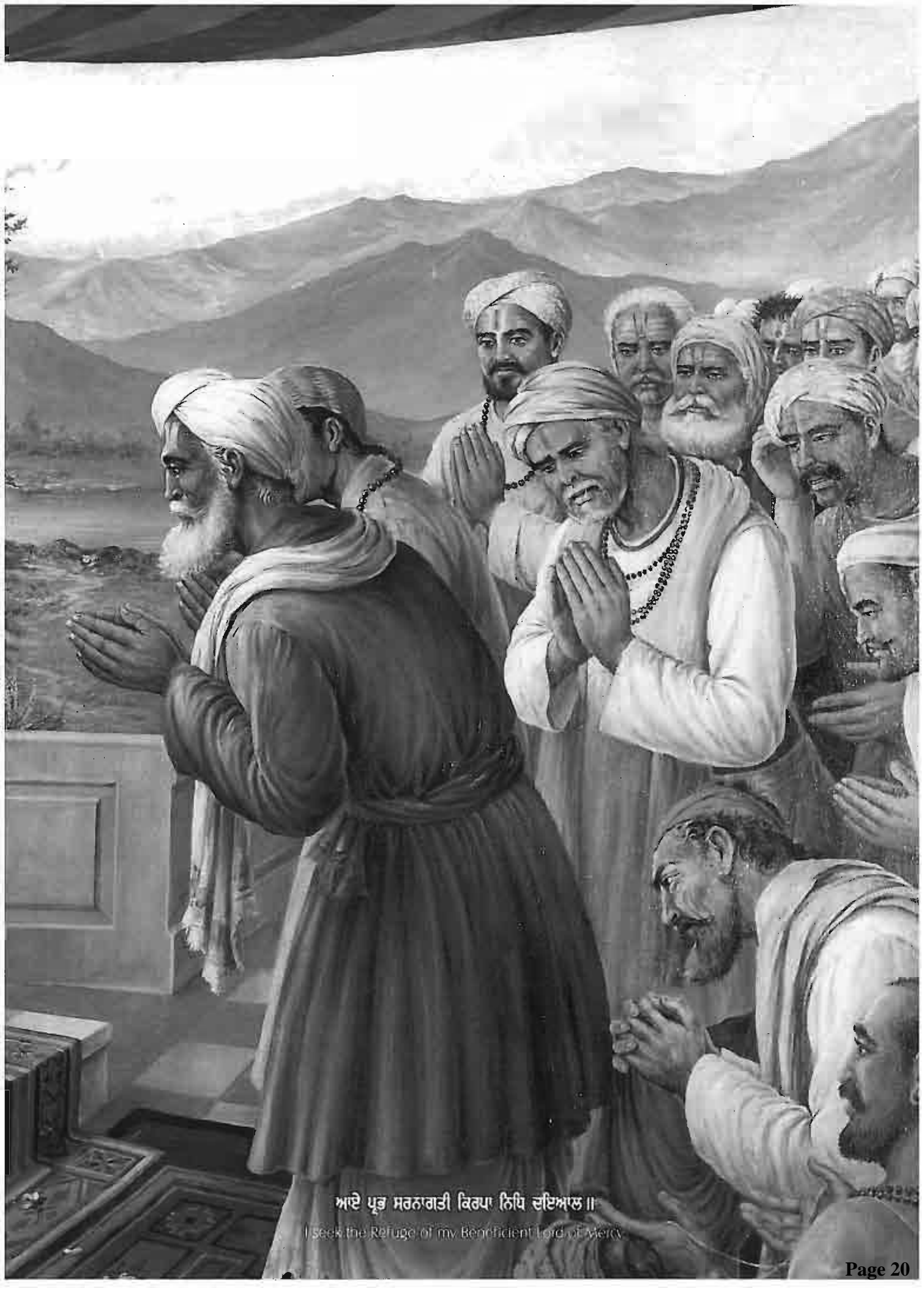
Immediately thereafter, the Guru undertook an extensive tour of the Panjab exhorting people to stand firmly together to resist repressive activities of the rulers. He instructed them "neither to fear nor to frighten others." This clearly annoyed the rulers in Delhi. The Guru was summoned to Delhi, but was reported as 'missing' by those who carried the summons. As a consequence, he was declared an absconder and warrants for his arrest were issued. He was arrested in Agra along with three of his disciples who were accompanying him. He was put in chains and exposed to torture alternating with offers of worldly allurements. However, he rejected allurements and endured torture but refused to give up his faith and accept Islam. He was then asked to perform some miracle to establish the veracity of his mission. This too he declined saying, "It would be insolence to interfere with the will of God." From the prison the Guru sent out a message to his disciples that after him Gobind shall be their Guru.

In 1675, orders of his execution were passed and he was executed on November eleven that year in the Chandni Chowk of Delhi. His son in his autobiography recorded:



The sanctum sanctorum of Takht Sri Harimandir Sahib, Patna. Facing the hall, the central presence is that of Guru Granth Sahib seated on a palanquin. Behind it stands a large size portrait of Guru Gobind Singh.





ਆਏ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਸਰਨਾਗਤੀ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਨਿਧਿ ਦਇਆਲ ॥

I seek the Refuge of my Beneficent Lord of Mercy

To protect the caste mark and
the sacred thread of the Hindus,
He performed a unique sacrifice.
He laid down his life for freedom
of faith – gave up his head but
compromised not his resolve.
He burst his mortal earthen pot on
the head of the King of Delhi
And departed to the Realms of the
Yond. No one else has ever
performed such a noble act.
– Bachitra Natak 5:13



Pages 16-17:
A delegation of 500
Kashmiri Brahmins
called on Guru Tegh
Bahadur at Anandpur.
Their leader Pandit Kirpa
Ram narrated the
harrowing tales of
torture initiated by the
orders of Aurangzeb for
converting them to
Islam and sought his
guidance and help.

A decision had been taken to expose his dead body to public view the next morning. However, under the cover of darkness, at night, a young Ranghreta Sikh, Bhai Jaita, stole the Guru's head and with it hurried away to Anandpur. Bhai Lakhi Shah Vanjara picked up the beheaded body covering it with cotton-wool that he was carrying in his bullock cart. He then made his way to his house in the outskirts of Delhi. Respectfully unloading the sacred body in his house, he said the parting prayers. He then set his house ablaze so that it may appear an accident.

When Bhai Jaita, after a hazardous journey, reached Anandpur with the head of Guru Tegh Bahadur, the whole city sank into woeful grief. However, the nine year old Gobind Rai displayed matchless courage and consoled one and all. He took Bhai Jaita into his embrace and blessed him saying "*Ranghrete Guru ke bete* i.e. Ranghretas are the offspring of the Guru." Guru Gobind Rai then performed the obsequies with great honour and people attended these with tears in their eyes and "*Waheguru*" on their lips.

Important Sikh temples arose in Chandni Chowk, Delhi, where his head was severed by the executioner and at Anandpur at the site of cremation of his head. Both are known by the name *Sis Ganj*. Where his body was cremated, a temple called *Rakab Ganj* came up.

Guru Gobind Rai helped people to emerge from the gloom that had descended on them. The valley soon began to resound again not only with the lilt of holy hymns but also with heroic balladry. Martial exercises and competi-

tions were resumed. At the Guru's desire, his followers began to bring offerings of weapons and horses. Anger and grief were replaced by redetermined purpose. A new nation seemed to be in the making. The *Pothi Sahib*, that is the holy book that Guru Arjan Dev had compiled, was in the possession of Dhir Mal family. The Sikhs had been rendered bereft of it. Guru Gobind Rai had learnt the entire text by heart and he made arrangements to dictate it, so that a fresh recension of the book should become available. This work was done in *bhora* i.e. an underground cellar. Gurdwara *Bhara Sahib* stands at that place.

Sojourn at Paonta

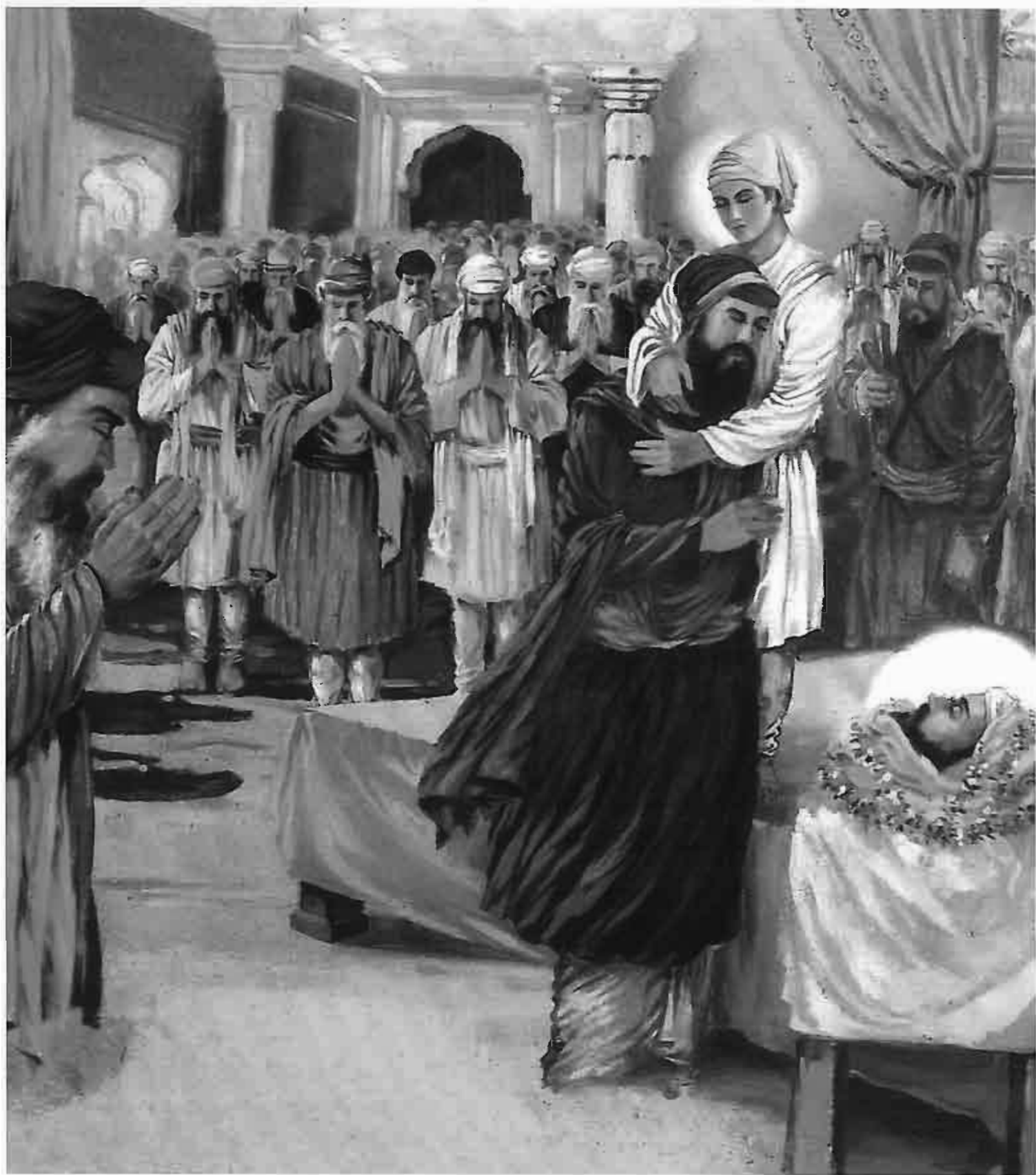
The Guru had been invited by Bhim Chand, the ruler of Nahan state, to visit him and do him the honour of hosting the Guru. The Guru accepted his invitation and was his guest for quite some time. The two developed mutual fondness. They used to go out hunting together. One day, during their chase, they happened to reach a spot by the river Yamuna where the landscape, waterscape and skyscape seemed to be embracing each other. The Guru expressed his amazement at the sheer beauty of the place. Bhim Chand, out of deference for the Guru, offered him ownership of that piece of land. Amidst the mystifying beauty of that place the Guru decided to settle down for some time. He had a fort built there. His Sikhs, who used to visit Anandpur to have a glimpse of him, now started visiting his new abode which came to be called *Paonta* (the Guru's foot stool).

In the tranquil atmosphere there, the Guru had enough time to himself. He pondered over the sad plight of his countrymen and speculated how he may free them from bonds of slavery, depravity and suffering.

He thought, he must first thoroughly acquaint himself with the traditions of his land. He therefore embarked on a schedule of self-education. He gratefully remembered the instruction that he had received from his father on a variety of topics. He also remembered how his mother taught him the Gurmukhi script. While at Patna, he had picked up *Maghdi*, the language of that part of the country. Now, he



There was a great consternation and confusion when Guru Tegh Bahadur's head was severed from his body by the executer at Chandni Chowk, Delhi in 1675 A.D. While Bhai Jaita took the head to Anandpur. Lakhi Shah Vanjara escaped with the body of the Guru and cremated by setting fire to his home at a site, now known as Gurdwara Rakab Ganj.



started learning Persian from Qazi Pir Mohammed, whose descendents possess an autograph given by him to their ancestors. He also learnt Sanskrit from Sahib Chand Granthi. He imbibed the *puranas* and epics, *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*. He demythologised much of them and then remythologised them giving them a new slant that well reflected his novel preferences on certain topics and about some characters.

His special focus was on chivalry and fortitude. Heroic balladry especially fascinated him. It is not surprising, then, that he composed four heroic odes about the battles of the goddess Durga - three in Braj and one in Panjabi. Stylistically these odes present unusual martial cadence, richness of imagery and abundance of metaphor. They have a great variety of form. The wide spectrum of their metres ranges from the monosyllabic to multipedic. He employed torrential rhythms and clanging sounds that remind us of the hill torrents and galloping steeds. His derision of superstition is reflected in his incisive irony, satire and banter. The purpose behind these odes, the Guru tells us, in his own words:

The popular story of Bhagawat
I cast into folk tongue
With no other purpose than to
glorify the holy war.
- Krishnavtar 2491-92

What he composed, his childhood mate Bhai Mani Singh penned down for him. Once he was dictating his scribe a verse of *Akal Ustat* in which occurred an expression *tuhi* which means "only you!" He was so inspired by the mystic import of that term that he went on chanting *tuhi tuhi* for sixteen hours at a stretch. When his trance ended, he was himself surprised that he had continued to dictate that one term for full sixteen hours. He then suggested that only sixteen repetitions of this word may remain in that text and the remaining be deleted.

The object of his work was twofold - to sing the praises of *Akal* (the Eternal Lord) and to infuse new courage and vigour into the long

demoralised mass of people. His poetical prowess created matchless verse in which mystical ardour was expressed with thunderous virility. God had become synonymous with the sword and the sword with God. His God became *Sarab Loh* i.e. 'All steel' and *Sri Asipan* i.e. 'One with a Sword in His hand'. Here is how he praised his God:

You, o Lord, are the Subduer of
Kingdoms, Destroyer of Hordes of
the wicked. You bless the valorous
in the battlefield. Your arm is
infringible, refulgent Your brilliance.
Bedazzling is Your Splendour like
the sun. You shower Bliss on the
holy and terror on the wicked.
You daunt the evil, and sinners You
scatter. Hail ! O Hail to the Creator of
the Universe, the Saviour of the World,
Upholder of my being,
Hail to You, O Sword !
- Bachitra Natak 1:2-1

He gave the people a God who was fearless and valorous. He believed that 'you become like the one you worship'. The valiance of his God was always imbued with His love and compassion. Here is how the Guru salutes his God in his unique work, *Jap Sahib*:

Hail, the wielder of weapons,
Hail, the hurler of missiles,
Hail, the Wisdom ultimate,
Hail, the Mother of all. 52:1-4

In one of his verses, Guru Gobind Singh makes a supplication for a courageous death for himself in the battlefield fighting for a worthy cause:

Grant me this boon, O Lord,
That never should I shrink back
from doing good.
I should have no fear of the foe
When engaged in a battle,
And convincingly turn victory
with faith to my side.
That I should follow determination mine



Bhai Jaita laying the
sacred head of Guru
Tegh Bahadur
respectfully before
Guru Gobind Rai.
The Guru embraced
Bhai Jaita and said
RANGRETE -
GURU KE BETE:
Rangretas are the
offspring of the Guru.



Guru Gobind Singh dictating the Guru Granth Sahib
with Bhai Mani Singh as his Scribe.



Bhai Mani Singh (1670-1734)

Bhai Mani Singh's elder brother Bhai Dayala was one of the companions of Guru Tegh Bahadur who were executed before him.

In 1699, on the great occasion of the birth of the Khalsa, Mani Ram also received Baptism of the Sword from Guru Gobind Singh and became Bhai Mani Singh.

In 1704, when Guru Gobind Singh evacuated Anandpur, Bhai Mani Singh joined Mata Sundri and Mata Sahib Devi and escorted them to Delhi. The ladies, posed themselves as Muslims and lived in a Muslim locality called *Matya Mahal*. When Mani Singh came to know that the Guru was in Talvandi Sabo (Damdama Sahib), he accompanied the ladies to join the Guru.

The volume of *Adi Granth* compiled by Guru Arjan Dev was in Kartarpur, in the possession of Dhir Mal, a grandson of Guru Hargobind. In spite of the fact that a group of Sikhs seized the *Granth* from Dhir Mal, Guru Tegh Bahadur made them return it to him. The recension of the *Granth* that Guru Gobind Singh made in the *bhora* at Anandpur, got washed away in the flooded Sarsa after the Guru evacuated Anandpur. The Guru decided to reproduce it. He took Mani Singh as his scribe and dictated him the entire *Granth* from memory, adding



to it 117 hymns of Guru Tegh Bahadur.

Later on, the Guru also dictated him his own compositions *Jap*, *Bachitra Natak*, *Akal Ustat*, *Chandi ki Var*, *Chaubis Avatar*, *Shashtra Nam Mala*, *Triya Charitra*, and *Zafarnamah*. These works were later on arranged by Mani Singh in one volume, collectively known as *Dasam Granth*.

When the Guru went with Emperor Bahadur Shah to Agra and to the South, Bhai Mani Singh remained in attendance of the Guru. He was present with the Guru at Nanded when the Guru passed away on October 7, 1708. Later at Harimandir Sahib, a dispute erupted between *Bandai Khalsa*, the followers of Banda Bahadur, and *Tat Khalsa*, the baptised Sikhs, Bhai Mani Singh was able to diffuse the situation.

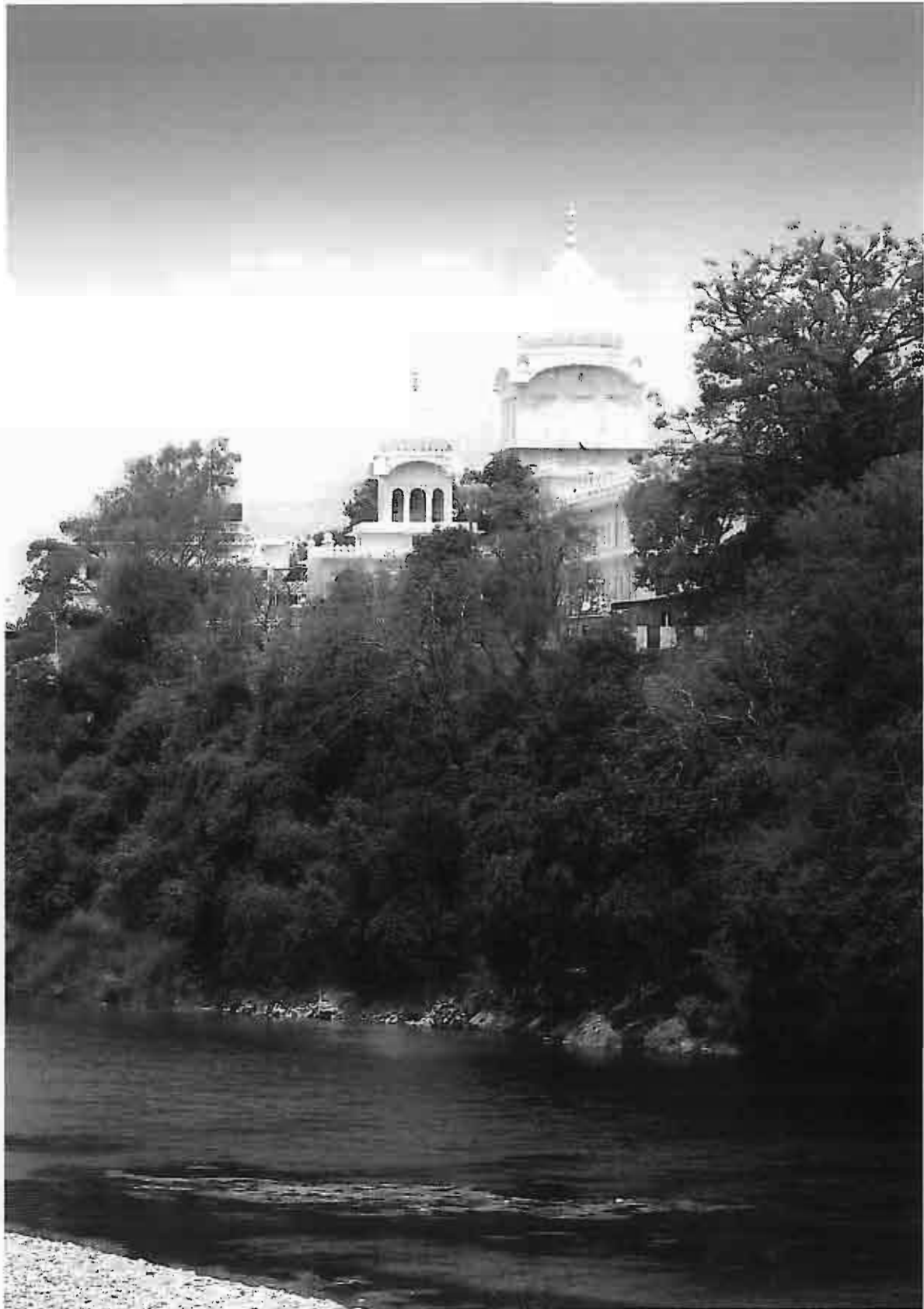
On the Baisakhi festival of 1734, he invited an assembly of Sikhs at Amritsar after getting permission of the government against a tribute of Rs. 5,000 to be paid after the festival. However, the rulers really intended destroying all the Sikhs that would gather there. Sensing such adverse intentions of the government, Mani Singh cancelled the fair. So there were no visitors and no offerings out of which the tribute money could be paid. He was arrested and taken to Lahore and was sentenced to death by being cut joint by joint in 1734.

And covet only to sing Your praise.
And then, when the time comes, I should die
Fighting in the field of strife.
— Krishnavtar 231:1

Not only was the Guru an exquisite poet himself, he was also a great patron of poets and men of letters. He had in his permanent employment as many as fifty two bards who took part in the poetical symposia held at a special spot on the bank of Yamuna. The Guru provided them instruction and correction. The better known among them were Sainapat, Ani Rai, Kanshi Ram, Sukhdev, Nand Lal Goya and Mani Singh. All the works of these poets and of

the Guru comprised the voluminous book *Vidya Sagar Granth*. It was, however, washed away in the Sarsa river when the Guru along with his entourage left Anandpur and had to wade through this flooded stream to evade the pursuing hordes. What was left of that book plus whatever could be retrieved from the memory of people was put together into a book by Bhai Mani Singh under the supervision of Mata Sundri, wife of the Guru. That book came to be called *Dasam Granth*, 'The Book of the Tenth Master'. The key note of this book is spiritual optimism (*charhdi kala*).

Guru Gobind Rai was a great humanist and advised his Sikhs to:



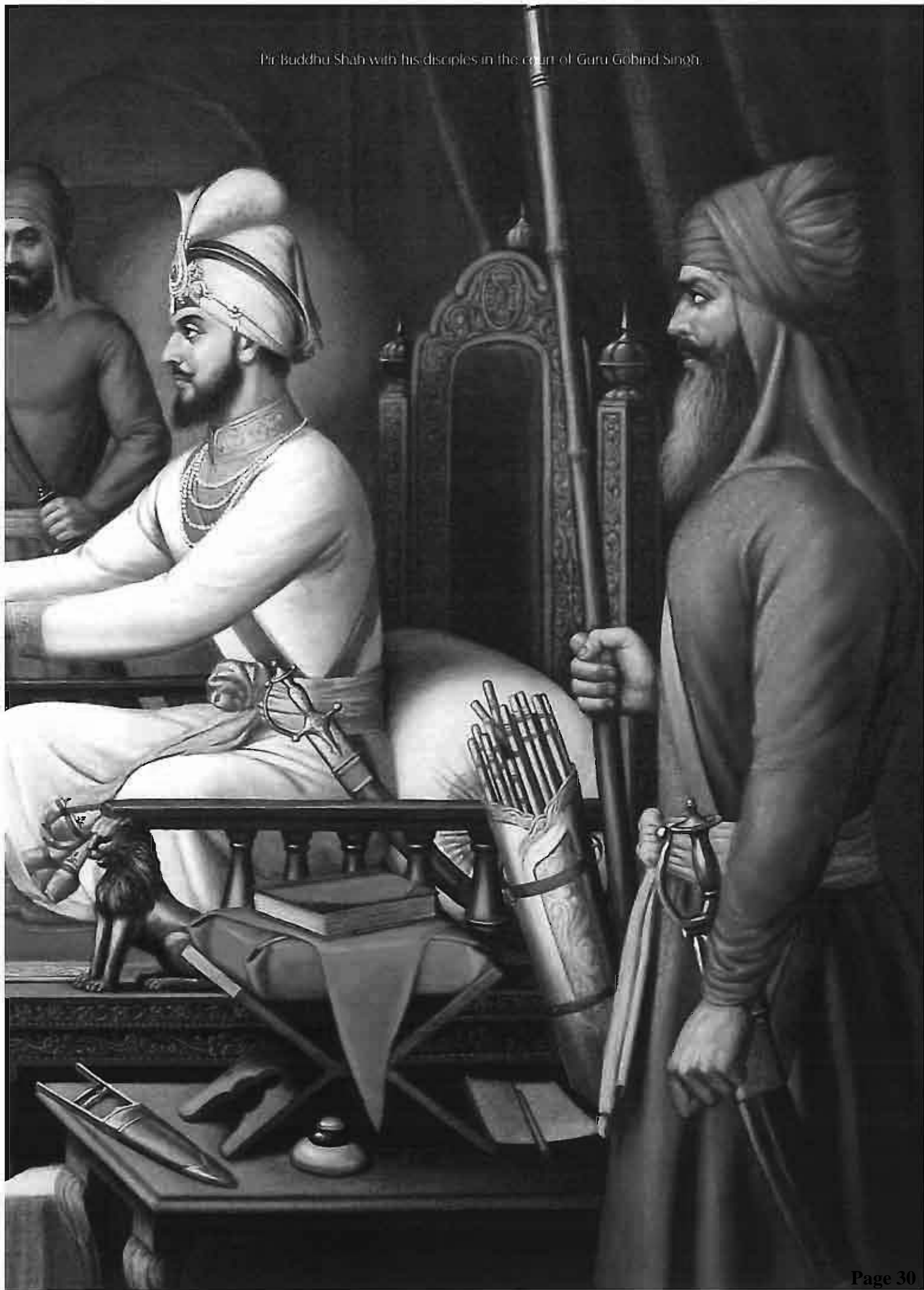
Gurdwara Paonta Sahib
founded by Guru
Gobind Singh in 1685.

This is now in
Himachal Pradesh.
At Paonta Sahib, with
52 poets and writers,
Guru Gobind Singh
produced a vast
treasure of literature
and translated many
Ancient Indian classics.



Gurinder pal Singh
2000

Pir Buddhu Shah with his disciples in the court of Guru Gobind Singh.



Recognise all mankind as one.
 The temple and the mosque are
 the same, So too the Hindu and
 Muslim forms of worship.
 All men are the same; differences
 are illusory. The bright and the dark,
 the ugly and the handsome,
 The Hindu and Muslim appear
 different for geographic reasons.
 All have the same eyes, the same ears,
 the same body, the same build –
 A compound of the same four elements.
 – Akal Ustat 86:1

He pronounced:
 Hear ye all, I declare this Truth:



Gurdwara
 Bhangani Sahib
 marks the site
 where the Guru had
 kept his munitions
 and provisions.

They alone who practise love obtain the Lord
 – Akal Ustat 29:8

Even while the Guru had given much priority to literary work at Paonta, he did not neglect even his favorite pastimes - riding, shooting and hunting.

In the year 1682, the daughter of Harjas was to be married to Guru Gobind Singh. Harja belonged to Lahore and expressed the desire that the marriage should take place in Lahore. The Guru accepted his plea. However, it so happened, the conditions in Anandpur would not permit him to be absent from there. So, he got a special new township established some eighteen kilometres to the north of Anandpur.

Pir Buddhu Shah (1641-1705)

Pir Buddhu Shah was a Muslim saint belonging to Sadhaura in Ambala District of Panjab. His original name was Sayyid Badrud-din. Even from his childhood, he was inclined towards spiritual pursuits and had little interest in worldly affairs. On account of this and on account of his rather quiet disposition, his parents called him *buddhu* or 'stupid'. However, as he grew up, people began to realise that he was a man of God. Yet the epithet of 'Buddhu Shah' stuck with him.

Most Muslims approved of forcible conversions of his non-Muslim subjects to Islam by Aurangzeb. They even rejoiced at the execution of Guru Tegh Bahadur. However, the soul of Pir Buddhu Shah felt pained and tormented at this wrong deed. He became a great admirer of Guru Gobind Rai. When the Guru was at Paonta, he called on him to pay his condolences and stayed with him for some time. He enjoyed discoursing with him on spiritual matters.

During one of his conversations with the Guru, the Pir asked him, "How can one meet God?" The Guru replied, "Just the way the night meets the day." The Pir remarked, "But

when the night meets the day, it no longer remains night. It simply disappears." The Guru explained, "Likewise, when Truth dawns, falsehood vanishes. In the same way, the ego vanishes when one meets God."

The Pir was approached by five Pathan leaders, each with a contingent of a hundred mercenary soldiers, who were unemployed and requested him for help. The Pir recommended them to the Guru and he employed them on daily wages. However, a few months later, hill chiefs decided to mount an attack on the Guru. Before the battle took place, the Pathans deserted the Guru and went over to the hill rajas. When the Pir came to know about it, he hurried to the Guru along with his sons and seven hundred disciples.

Sixteen years after the battle of Chamkaur, Wazir Khan, the Governor of Sirhind, suddenly woke up to the help that the Pir had given the Guru. So, he ordered Usman Khan, the Darogha of Sadhaura, to destroy the Pir and his family. They were all killed in cold blood on March 21, 1705.

Later on, the Pir's tomb became a place of pilgrimage for Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs alike.







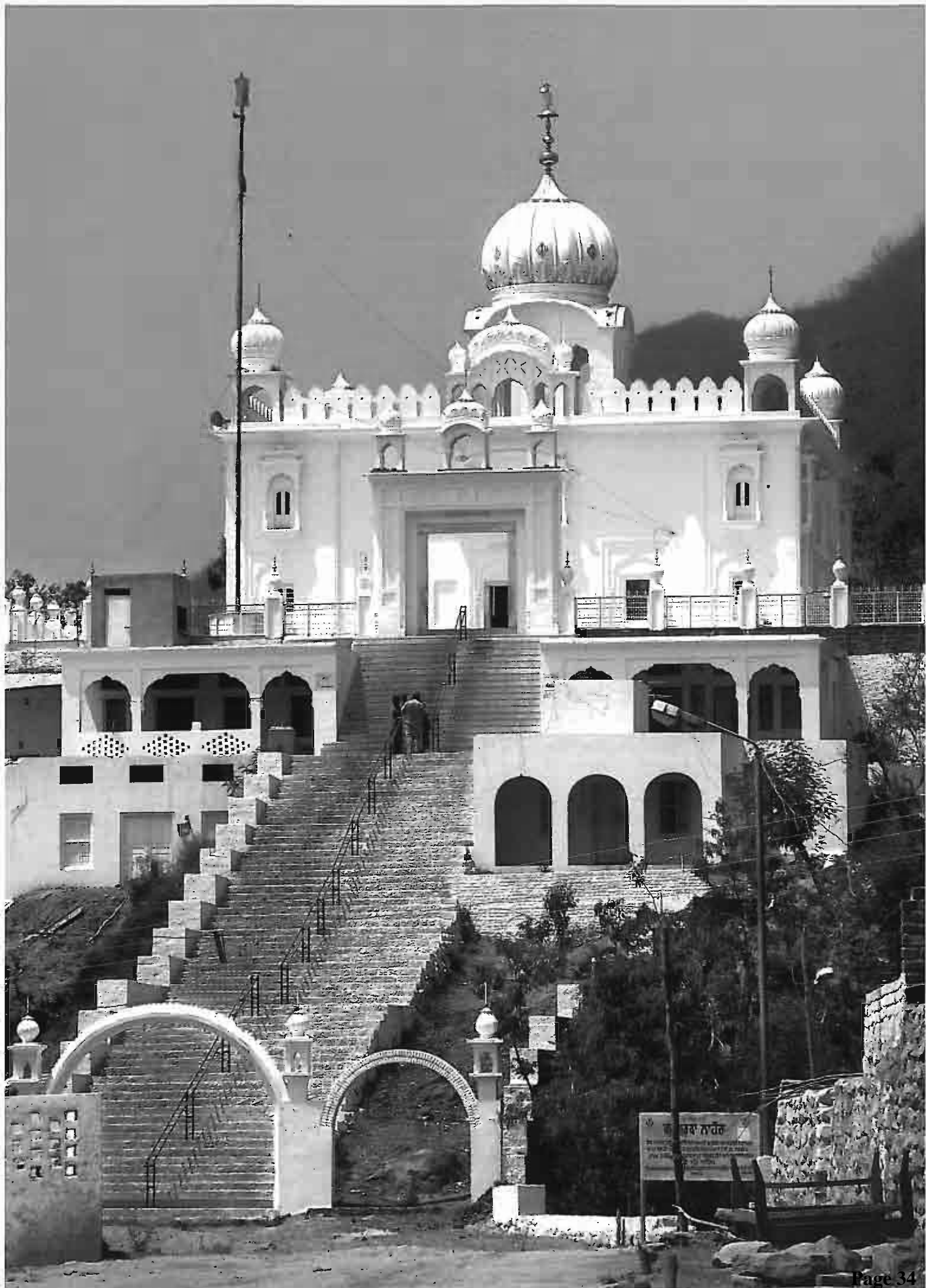
Gurdwara Bhattha Sahib

On the main highway from Chandigarh to Kullu and Kangra valleys, this Gurdwara commemorates the visit of Guru Gobind Singh. It is believed, here by the touch of the hoof of the Guru's horse, the red hot brick kiln (Bhattha) instantaneously cooled down.

Opposite page: Guru Ka Lahore

A cluster of three Gurdwaras (Gurdwara Anand Karaj Sihan Patshahi Dasvin, Gurdwara Triveni Sahib, Gurdwara Paur Sahib) near Basantgarh village in Bilaspur district of Himachal Pradesh and about 12 kilometres north of Anandpur sahib in Punjab is related to Guru Gobind Singh's marriage with Mata Jito on June 21, 1677.







ਸਭੈ ਬੀਰ ਧਾਏ । ਸਰੇਖੀ ਚਲਾਏ । ਤਥੈ ਤਾਕਿ ਬਾਣੀ । ਹਨ੍ਹੇ ਏਕ ਜੁਆਣੀ ।

All the warriors fled, when a volley of arrows was showered. Then I aimed the arrow on a warrior and killed him.



and named it Lahore. The marriage came to be celebrated from the Guru's Lahore. That place has since been called *Guru ka Lahore*.

The battle of Bhangani

In the midst of such peaceful and productive times in Paonta, trouble suddenly sprouted from unexpected quarters. The rulers of the hill states developed both awe and jealousy for the Guru. They also resented his support to the lower castes. Raja Bhim Chand of Kahlur supported by Raja Fateh Shah of Srinagar decided to attack Paonta. When the Guru came to know of it, he chose to forestall them at Bhangani about nine kilometers from Paonta. There, he selected for himself a raised mound, *Garhi*, from where he could shoot his arrows. As the armies came face to face, the 500 Pathan mercenaries whom the Guru had employed at the instance of his friend Pir Buddhu Shah, deserted him, having been manoeuvred by his adversaries. So did an almost equal number of Udasis. Nonetheless, the Guru along with his seven hundred odd Sikhs and the contingent of Pir Buddhu Shah's disciples routed his numerically superior attackers.

After the said battle, some of his men approached him for permission to pursue the enemy further and annex some of his land. The Guru forbade them, saying, "Our mission is not grabbing land, but fighting injustice." Hence no political or territorial advantage was to be taken from any conquest.

The battle of Bhangani took place towards the end of February, 1686.

Disappointment with Hill Rajas

Soon after the battle of Bhangani, the Guru moved from Paonta to Anandpur, which had been depopulated during the Guru's rather protracted sojourn at Paonta. On returning to Anandpur, the Guru had four forts built there, in order to keep the hill potentates at bay. These were Anandgarh, Lohgarh, Keshgarh and Fatehgarh.

The Mughal Government at Delhi made demands of tribute from hill chiefs, but they were reluctant to pay. Mian Khan the governor of Jammu despatched Alif Khan to exact the

tribute. Some of the chiefs chose to condescend and paid the tribute. However, Raja Bhim Chand refused to submit. He sought the Guru's help. The Guru, who had been his guest at Paonta, agreed to fight for him. A slovenly battle came to be fought in Nadaun on the left bank of Beas. Alif's army was routed and he himself fled in despair. The routing of the Mughal army was ascribed to the Guru's support to Bhim Chand. That created some anxiety in the mind of the Emperor who had already warned the Guru against assembling his Sikhs in numbers.

The Emperor sent Prince Muazzim (later, Emperor Bahadur Shah) on 13th July 1696 to chastise the hill Rajas. The prince reached Lahore, stationed himself there and sent an officer Mirza Beg to chastise the hill chiefs. Mirza Beg made them surrender and punished them severely, but left the Guru alone at the suggestion of Bhai Nand Lal who was a secretary to the prince and at the same time, a trusted Sikh of the Guru.

The Guru wanted to work with the quasi independent states of Shivaliks and awaken in them a sense of national unity. However, he was dismayed with them for they were deeply steeped in superstition and would not rise above their prejudices especially of caste and race and were impervious to recognising a national purpose. Dr Sir Gokul Chand Narang says, "...the work of Guru Gobind Singh can be divided into two parts, viz the creation of a nation and his armed campaigns. When I say the creation of a nation, I mean the words to be taken quite literally, for when Guru Gobind Singh began his work, there was no such thing as a Hindu Nation..."

(*Transformation of Sikhism* p. 135).

The myth of Durga Pujan

The Guru was counselled by a group of 'learned' Pundits that to attain his object, he should propitiate Durga, the Goddess of Power. The Guru thought that would be a good occasion to hit at their superstition and to disillusion them. He therefore asked Pundit Kesho Ram from Varanasi to conduct the propitiatory ceremony on the hills of Nainadevi. The Pundit

tried reciting relevant *mantras* a million times while simultaneously pouring into the sacrificial fire the incense and ghee as required. Even when all the material had been burnt and the Pundit himself exhausted, the goddess still did not show up. The Guru then came forward and flashing his naked sword before the assembly, said, "Look! this sword is the Goddess of Power and no other."

Birth of a nation

March 30, 1699 was the day of Baisakhi festival of that year. On this day, the Guru wanted to have the biggest ever congregation of the Sikhs. For this, he made special preparation: Messages were sent everywhere calling upon Sikhs to come in full strength wearing arms. Elaborate arrangements were made for the reception. There was tense anticipation in Anandpur that something momentous was going to happen, but no one knew exactly what. Streams of visitors poured in on the appointed day. Reliable chronicles report that the assembly consisted of anywhere between forty to eighty thousand. In the midst of that vast gathering, on a special platform raised for the purpose, the Guru rose with unsheathed sword in his hand and addressed his audience. He first recited the following verse of his:

O Holy Sword! I bow to you heartily
with love and devotion.

Assist me that I may bring this
task to conclusion.

You are the conqueror of countries,
Destroyer of armies of the wicked
in the battlefield,

And adorn the valorous with
awards and rewards.

Your arm is infrangible and
brightness refulgent.

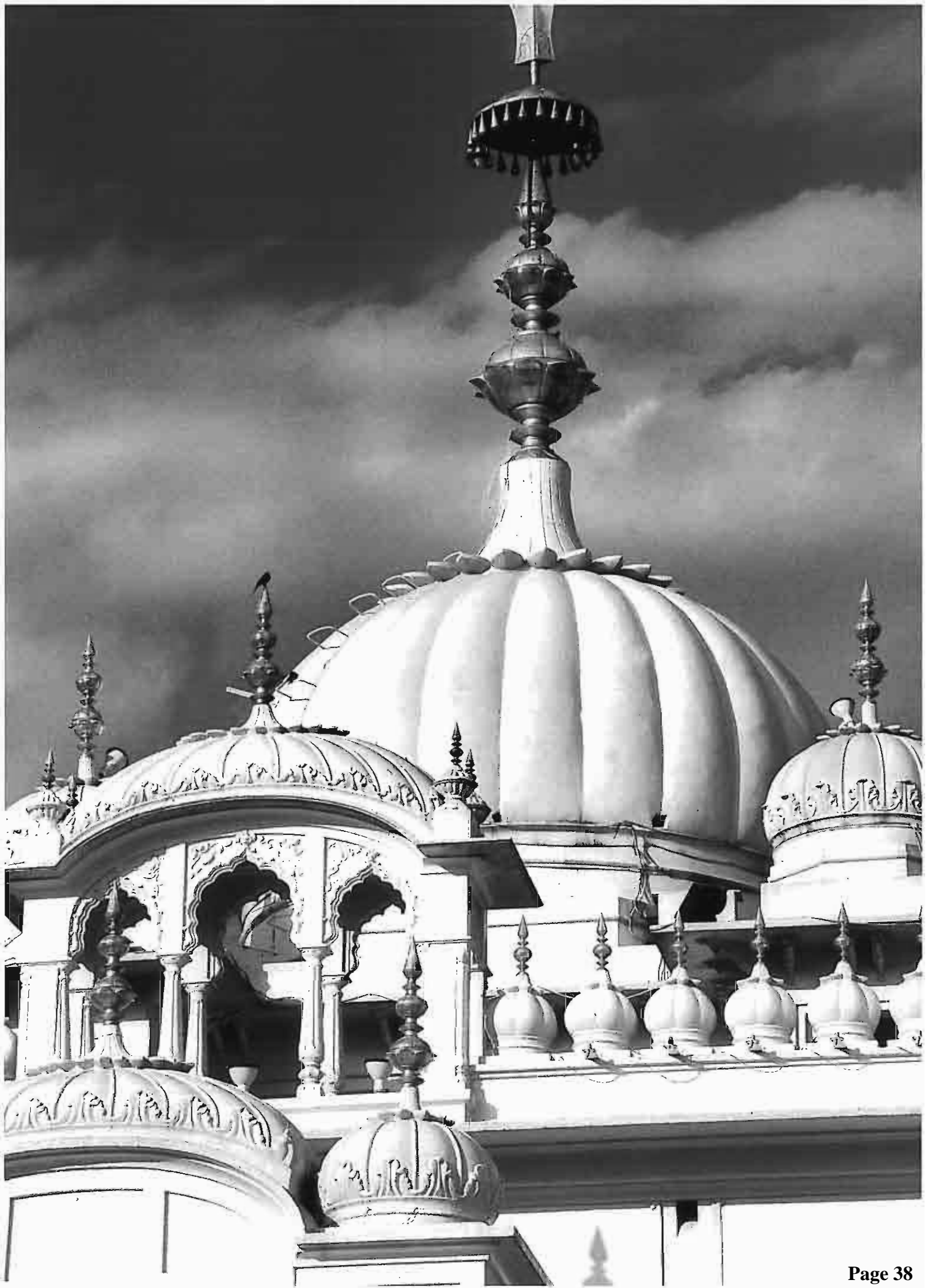
Your radiant splendour dazzles as the sun.

— Bachitra Natak 1:1

After having saluted the Sword thus, he made a stimulating appeal in the name of the country and nation. He emphasized the necessity of subverting the tyrannous Mughal rule.



Top of
Takht Sri Keshgarh,
Anandpur
It is the shrine where
Guru Gobind Rai
created the *Khalsa*.







ਪੀੜਹੁ ਪਾਹੁਲ ਖੰਡੇਧਾਰ ਹੁਇ ਜਨਮ ਸੁਹੇਲਾ ।

Drinking the Nectar of the double-edged dagger, my Life has attained meaning.

and building a new nation. He presented a picture of a new class of men and women who shall be ready to sacrifice everything, even their own life for freedom. He put forth the belief that time was ready for action. "Now or never! We must act and break the shackle of demeaning slavery. It is sin to be cruel, but a greater sin to submit to cruelty without demur. A life of slavery is the biggest curse. We must resolve that from now on we shall move with our heads held high. We would not frighten anyone but shall not be frightened by anyone either. Our faith in the Fearless (*nirbhau*) Lord shall make us also undaunted. We must resolve to endure every adversity to achieve our ideal; not shrink even from laying down our lives..."

After having made that appeal he raised his Sword high and said, "Today my Sword wants a head. Is there one among you who can lay down his life at the Guru's call?" For a while no one moved, but soon Daya Ram, a Khatri of Lahore came forward and said, "I offer my head unto you, my Master. What better luck can I have than dying under your Sacred Sword?" The Guru led him into a tent in the rear.

After a while, the Guru returned with his sword dripping blood and asked for another head. This was far more than most could endure. So the assembly started thinning out somewhat. Yet, Dharam Das, a Jat of Hastinapur advanced and offered his head. He was also led to the tent and the Guru reappeared with his sword dripping blood again. The Guru made three more calls like that and turn by turn came forth Mohkam Chand of Dwarka, Himmat Das of Jaggannath Puri and Sahib Chand of Bidar. They were likewise taken to the same tent. This last time when the Guru reappeared, he brought out behind him all those five Sikhs whom he had taken there a while ago. They were all robed in identical bright blue dress and their heads supporting neatly tied turbans. Their faces shone with the glow of humble pride and their eyes tender with gratitude. The Guru himself, attired likewise, led the five on to the platform behind him. The assembly was simply wonderstruck.

The Guru then introduced the five as his

Panj piyare i.e. his Five Beloved Ones. "Having passed the supreme test, they have not only brought glory to themselves, but also to the faith of Guru Nanak. Today, with them, we initiate a new order, the Order of the Khalsa God's Knights-at-Arms." He then commenced the ceremony of the Baptism of Steel. He took an iron bowl with clear water which he started stirring with a *Khanda*, a double edged sword and continued to recite five sacred texts to sanctify the operation. While the preparation was going on, Mata Jito brought some sugarcandy to pour into it, thus adding sweetness to the alchemy of steel. That is how *Amrit*, the 'Nectar of Immortality' was prepared. The Guru then doled out to each one of the five, palmfuls of it to drink who gulped it and chanted after him:

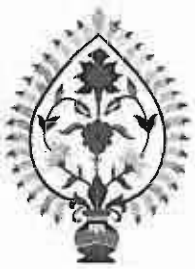
Waheguru ji ka Khalsa, Waheguru ji ki Fateh –

Hail to the Khalsa who belongs to the Wonderful Lord,

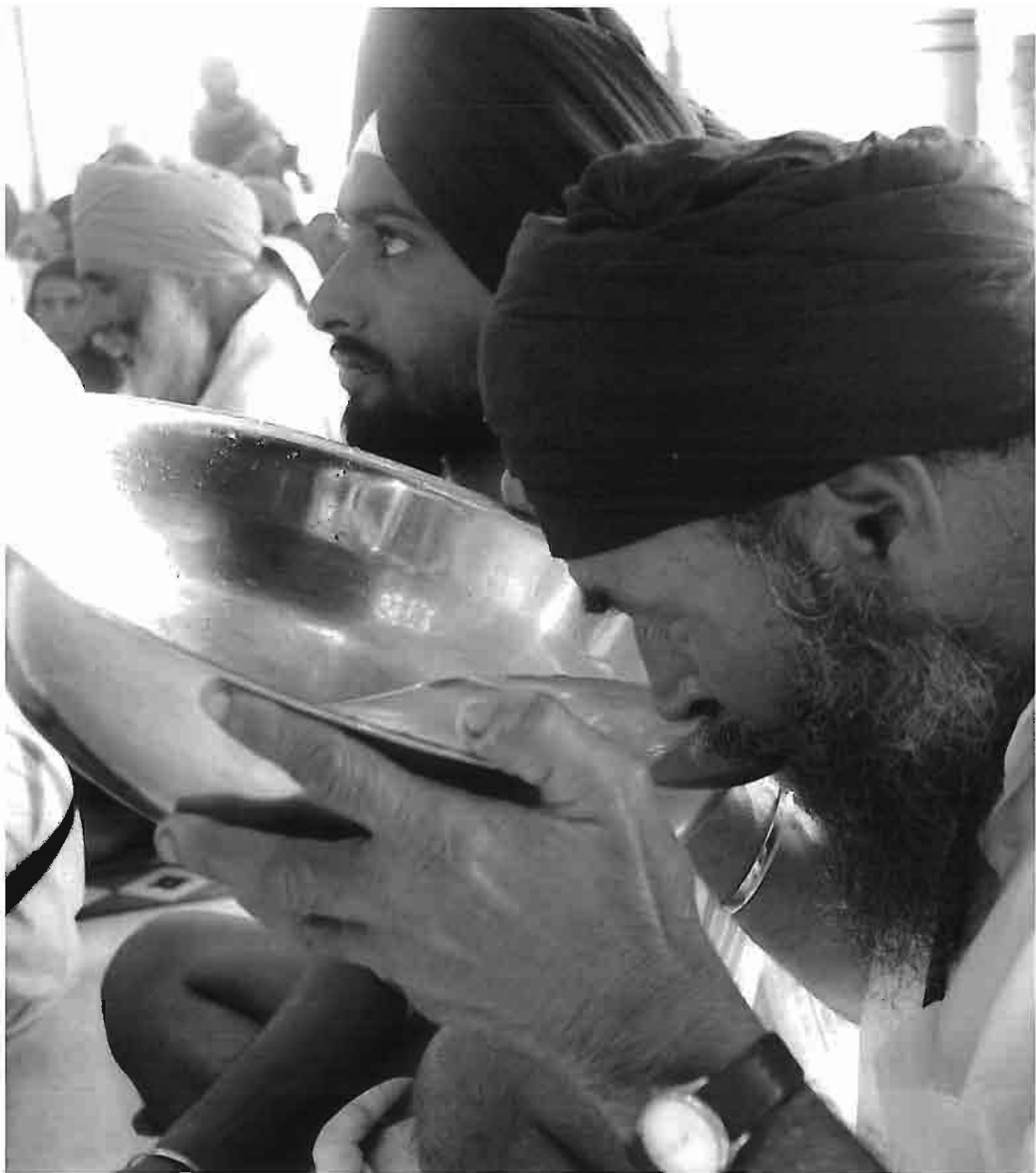
Hail to the Wonderful Lord to whom belong victory.

The Guru also splashed *Amrit* into the eye of his Beloved Ones while he gazed intently into their pupils. Then, he anointed the hair on their head. Finally, he asked them to quaff one by one the *Amrit* that still remained in the bowl. They had become reborn, which meant the annihilation of their previous ancestral lineage (*kul nas*), their hitherto followed occupation (*karam nas*), their earlier creeds (*dharam nas*) and their superstitions (*bharam nas*). Then on their father was Guru Gobind Singh, and their birth place was Anandpur. This marked a total break with the past. They were given the surname *Singh* meaning 'lion'. (Subsequently for women, the name Kaur, meaning 'princess' came to be prescribed). They were required to worship only the One Formless, Timeless Peerless Lord. They were always to wear on their person the five sacred emblems of their new Order. These were *kesh* the untrimmed hair, *kangha* or a comb to keep the hair tidy, *kara* or a steel bracelet, *kacchehra*, short breeches and *kirpan*, a sword.

Then the Guru asked the five initiated ones to prepare the *Amrit* the way he had done for



Amrit Ceremony
Devotees being initiated
into the fold of Khalsa.



them. When it became prepared, he stood before them with folded hands beseeching them to baptize him into their brotherhood. They hesitated at this strange request. However, the Guru explained that he also wanted to become a member of this august Order which has come into being under the direct command of the Almighty Lord. He did not want any difference between him and the Khalsa. Then the Guru was also initiated into the new Order and became Guru Gobind Singh instead of Gobind Rai. Hence the Khalsa was truly his alter-ego. The Guru eulogised the Sikhs constituting this new Order. In *Khalsa Mehma* he says:

Through their favour I won my battles,
Dispensed I largesse through their favour,
Through their favour, receded my troubles,
My well being profited through their favour.
Learning I acquired through their favour,
Through their favour, I subdued my foes.
I stand exalted through their favour.
Else, there are millions of humble ones
like me. I dedicate my head, my body,

my mind, my wealth and my all
Unto their service!
– Keshodas Prabodh 2:3-4

The Guru invited all members of the assembly to embrace the new Order; at the same time warning them also that it was no easy choice. One who opts for it shall have to follow the path of faith and sacrifice and of strict moral rectitude. In spite of the Guru's warning Baptismal Ceremony continued for several days and thousands joined the Order of the Khalsa.

Four strict taboos were prescribed for the initiates. They must never cut, trim or degrade their sacred hair in any way. They must not indulge in intoxicants especially tobacco which he called 'the filth of the world.' A Sikh must not covet another's woman. Eating flesh of an animal killed in the Muslim way was the fourth taboo.

In order to infuse the spirit of discipline, and courage among his Sikhs, the Guru declared, Disciplined conduct is loveable to me,
Not a Sikh (without it).
– Rehatnama Bhai Ram Singh



The Guru and Disciple are One

Opposite page: Nihangs, popularly known as knight errants of Guru Gobind Singh, are known for their typical apparel, peaked turbans festooned with quoits, insignia of the Khalsa and rosaries, all made of steel. During various festivals, especially the Hola Mahala at Anandpur and Nanded, they attract special attention of the visitors and devotees.







Nihangs

Nihangs or Nihang Singhs are endearingly designated as *Guru dian ladian faujan* 'the Beloved Knights of the Guru.'

Three different accounts are current about their origin. The first one represents an amusing prank by Guru Gobind Singh's little son, Fateh Singh. The three brothers elder to him were playing and did not admit him into the play saying that he was too little. Fateh Singh went in and tied one turban atop another till his height surpassed that of his brothers. Guru Gobind Singh, who was watching this prank was so pleased that he blessed the little one by saying, "There shall be a band of valorous Sikhs who shall dress as you have done."

The second account relates to the time when Guru Gobind Singh discarded his disguise of *Uch ka Pir* and shredded his blue

garment into pieces and threw them into fire. One shred was saved by Man Singh, the Guru's attendant, who stuck it on top of his turban. This led to a vogue among some to emulate Man Singh and wrap a blue *domala* over their head.

The third account relates to Naina Singh Akali, a leader of the Nishanyali (standard-bearing) *misl* that provided ensigns to the Dal Khalsa, the confederated Sikh army. He introduced a tightly tied turban with a *domala* on the head of the standard-bearer signifying the flag so that the ensign would be conspicuous. Baba Naina Singh's disciple, Akali Phula Singh earned great laurels during the time of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. He was the custodian of *Akal Takht* and so was the voice of the moral conscience of the state. At times, he censured and chastised even the Maharaja.

He wanted his Sikhs to be saint soldiers. He invoked long life for those who ever remembered God and had zest for righteous war in their heart.

The inauguration of the Order of the Khalsa meant realization of a divinely inspired mission and of the Guru's design for infusing flare for freedom among his disciples.

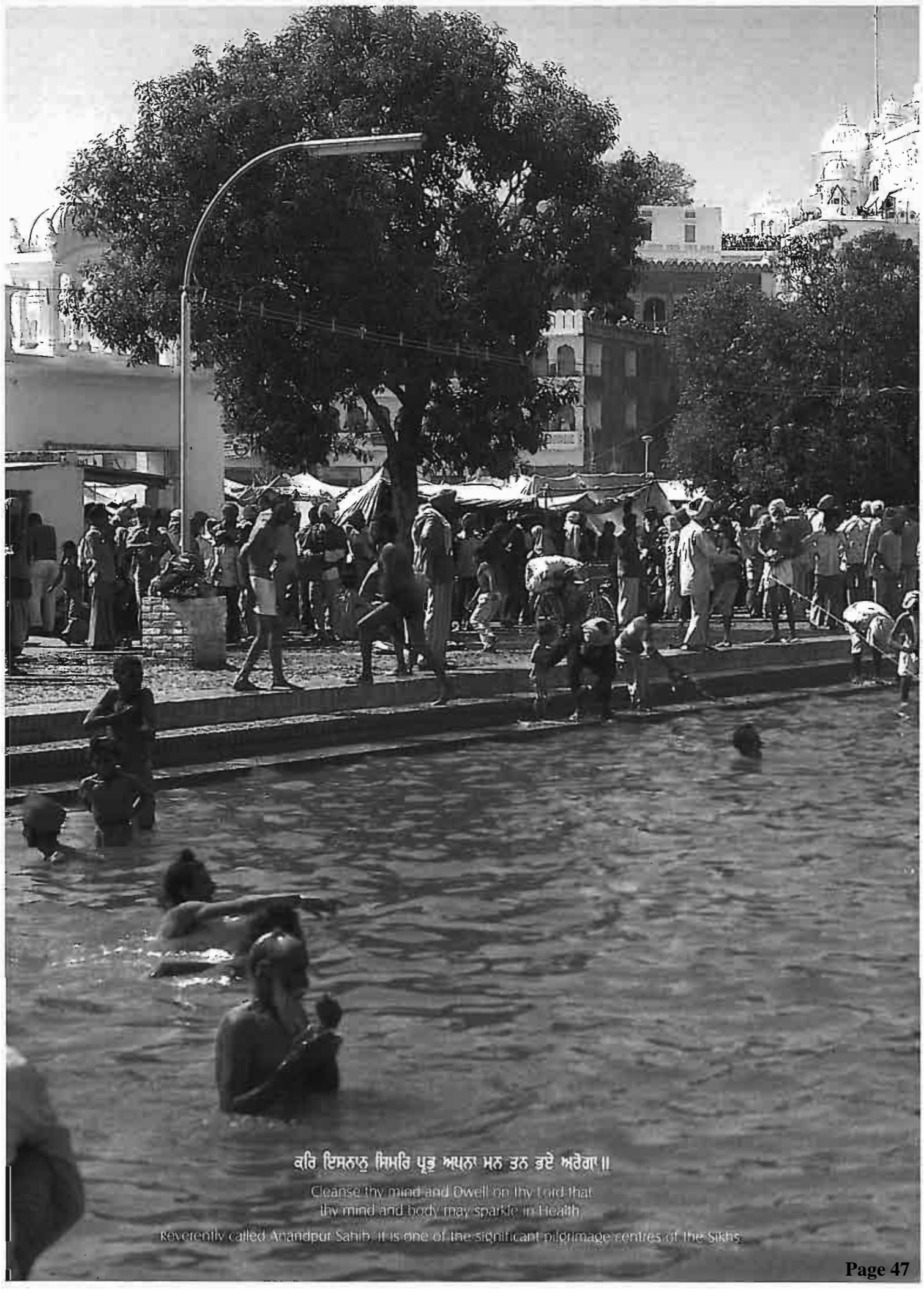
That inauguration ceremony had many psychological implications. First of all the traditionally insurmountable distance between the Guru and the disciple came to disappear. Even the Sikhs could now sanction the Guru if he appeared to neglect any tenets prescribed for the initiates of the Order. Five initiated Sikhs as a body came to represent the Guru in them. They could order even the Guru to obey their command and the Guru had no option but to submit. This happened at Chamkaur when the Guru had to leave the place in compliance of such an order.

In the Varanashram of the Hindus, only the high castes could get the status of *dvija*, 'the twice-born', but in the new Order everyone irrespective of his previous caste was a *dvija*.

Imperial orders of the day forbade any non Muslim from carrying a sword. By making it compulsory for all members of the Order to

carry a sword on their person, the Sikhs developed confidence to defy unjust and discriminatory orders of the rulers. The sword became the emblem of the Khalsa, but if they carried the sword in one hand, the other hand was, rotating their rosary. A nation of the Khalsa, 'the purified ones' had been brought into being.

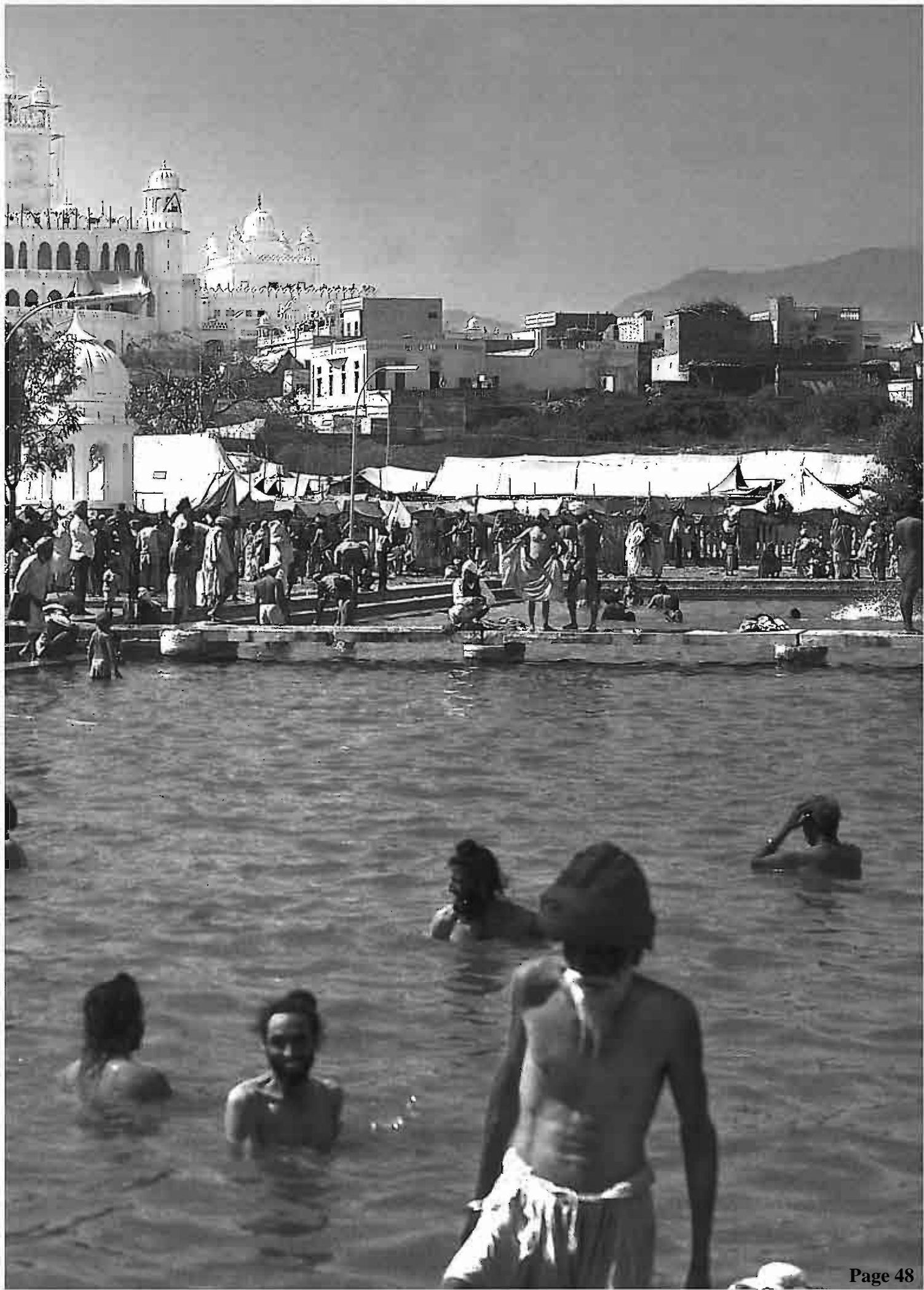
A new impulse of chivalry came to be generated in India that resulted in an unending chain of shining acts of sacrifice and gallantry. The Guru made one Sikh equal to a host of a lakh and a quarter. "I shall let a sparrow fly and lo! the imperial hawk shall fall before it." A great change came to be affected in the character of the initiated ones. The Guru's impress, not only elevated the minds of his Sikhs but also gave amplitude even to their physical frames. This surprising change came to the notice of many a traveller and historian such as Burns (*Travels* i. 285) and Elphinstone (*History of India*, ii. 564). Even those people who had been considered the dregs of society were transformed, as if by some magic, into something amazingly lofty. Even barbers, sweepers, water-carriers and confectioners who had never so much as touched a sword and who had accepted degrading slavery as

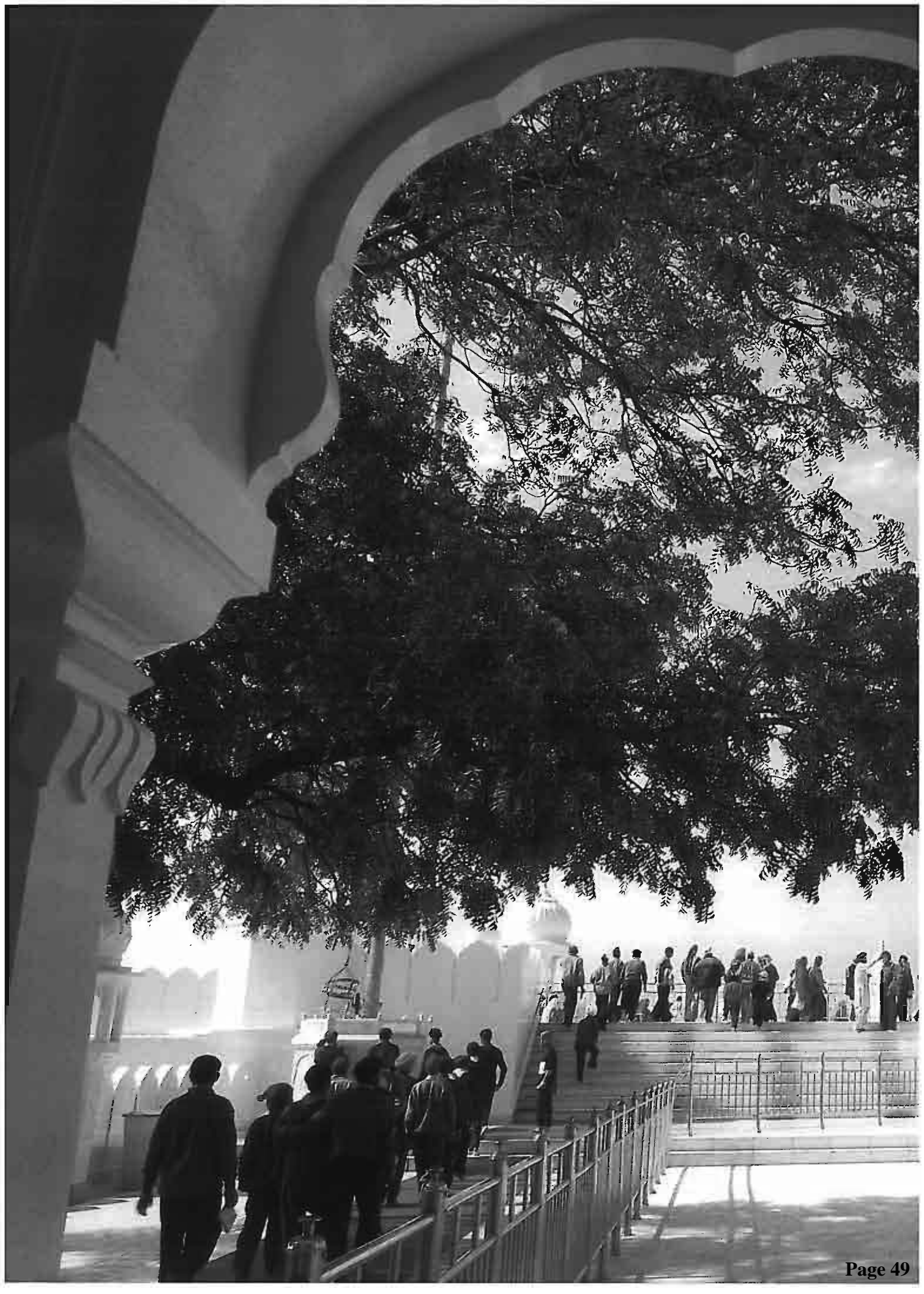


ਕਰਿ ਇਸਨਾਨੁ ਸਿਮਰਿ ਪ੍ਰਭੁ ਆਪਨਾ ਮਨ ਤਨ ਭਏ ਅਰੋਗਾ ॥

Cleanse thy mind and dwell on thy Lord that
thy mind and body may sparkle in Health.

Reverently called Anandpur Sahib, it is one of the significant pilgrimage centres of the Sikhs.





Lakht Sri Keshgarh Sahib, one of the five Lakhts or seats of highest religio-political authority of the Sikhs.



their fate, under the influence of the Guru became such determined warriors as could defy even death.

Anandpur began to throb with the new rhythm that the inauguration of the Khalsa had unleashed. It was at Anandpur that Guru Gobind Singh created a Death Defying Legion – *Nihangs* popularly known as *Guru Ki Ladli Fauj* (Darling army of the Guru's – Knights Errant). Even a new high spirited language came to be developed. A single Sikh would refer to himself as an army (*faujan*). One who was hungry, described himself as mad with prosperity. Death was considered an expedition to the next world. While onions were called 'silver pieces', Rupees were called 'pebbles.' If one had only parched grams to eat, he would declare, he was eating almonds. A blind man would be referred to as a 'brave warrior' (*soorma*). A deaf one would be referred to as 'resident of the upper story.' A cock was a 'Qazi', and a dog was 'Qutab ud din'. A club was 'repository of wisdom' (*akaldan*). A whole new vocabulary reflecting the spiritual optimism (*charhdi kala*) of the Khalsa was minted and put into vogue. This style of vocabulary was especially developed by *Nihangs* who constitute a special unworldly sect of Sikhs.

A little note about *charhdi kala* would be in order here. It is a subtly composite concept that stands for a perennially blossoming, unwilting spirit, a perpetual state of certitude resting on unwavering faith in Divine Justice. It also signifies an intensely energised, an ever ascending spirit characterized by faith, confidence, cheerfulness, courage, fortitude and a resolute determination to uphold the cherished ideals even in the face of most daunting challenges. A man of *charhdi kala* is known from his action and not merely from his pious resolutions. He is supposed to be readier than ready (*tiar bar tiar*). *Charhdi kala* is not just high morale but also unwavering faith in Divine support, certainty of moral victory and sublimity of action. Such was the spirit that Guru Gobind Singh infused into his Khalsa. It is surprising that its constancy did not wane even in the most adverse and life-threatening circumstances.

The First Battle of Anandpur

Bhai Santokh Singh in *Suraj Prakash* (III. xix. 44) observes, "The aim of the Guru in founding the Order of the Khalsa was to build a nation of the 'purified ones' free of the evil of society as well as false religiosity. But the rulers of the time thought that he was organising a force to destroy them." This is what the Mughal government in Delhi thought, and this is what the hill rajas around Anandpur believed. And the twain were ready to support each other's illusions.

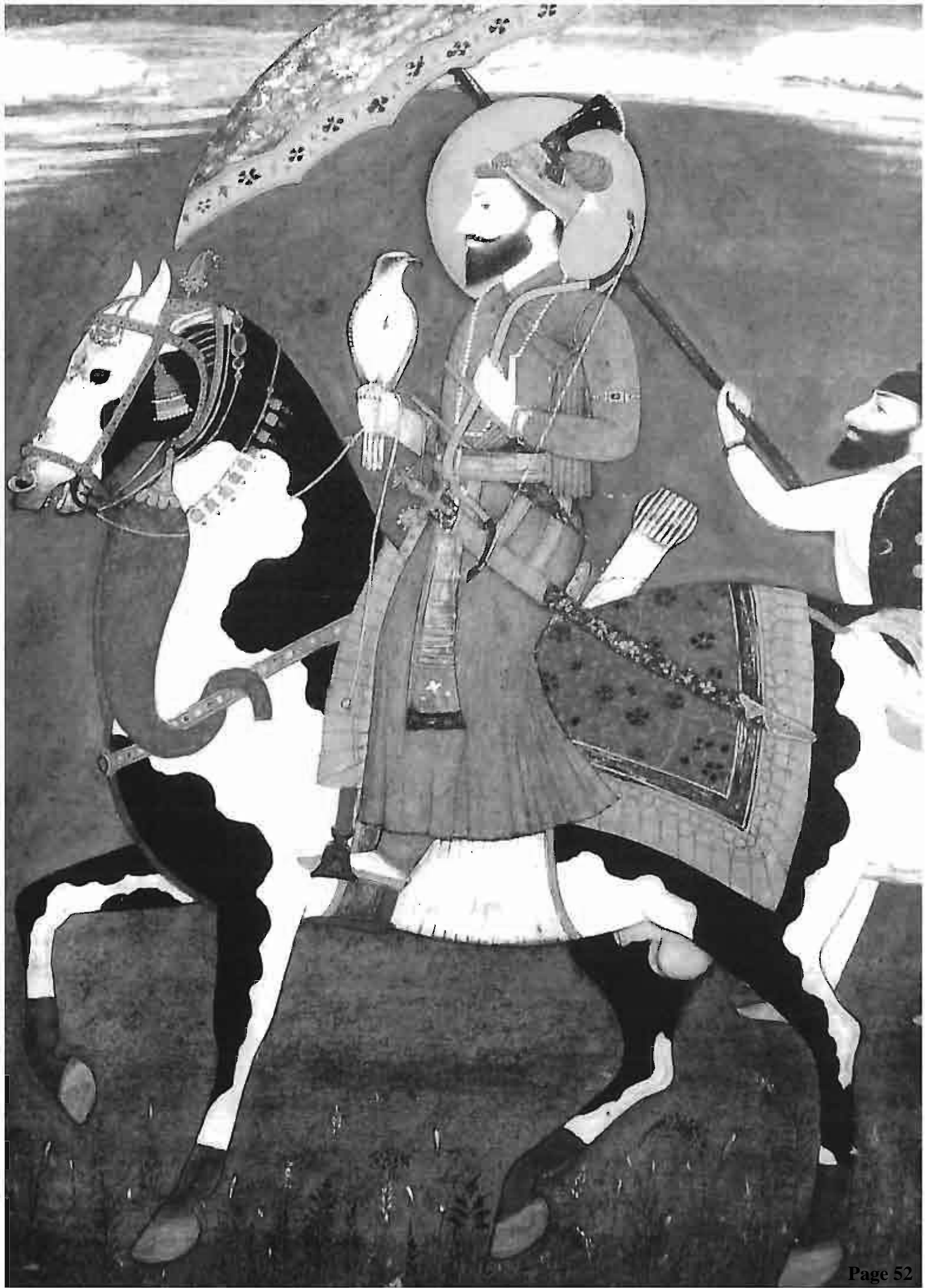
The hill rajas had suffered defeat after defeat from the Sikhs so they nursed a feeling of mortification and continued to plot against the Guru. They even proposed Ajmer Chand the Raja of Bilaspur, to go to the Emperor and their envoy and seek his assistance for destroying the Guru and his force. But Raja Bhup Chand of Handur, a rash impetuous youth strongly advocated an immediate attack. For him each day wasted would increase the Guru's following and enhance his strength. As a consequence of his passionate speech, the idea of despatching an envoy to the Emperor was given up and an attack on Anandpur was resolved to be mounted. The Rajas of Jammu, Nurpur, Mandi, Kulu, Keonthal, Chamba, Dathwal, Srinagar, Guler, and some others made a rapid march with their forces and reached the outskirts of Anandpur. They planned to besiege the city and cut it off from its surroundings and then launch their attack.

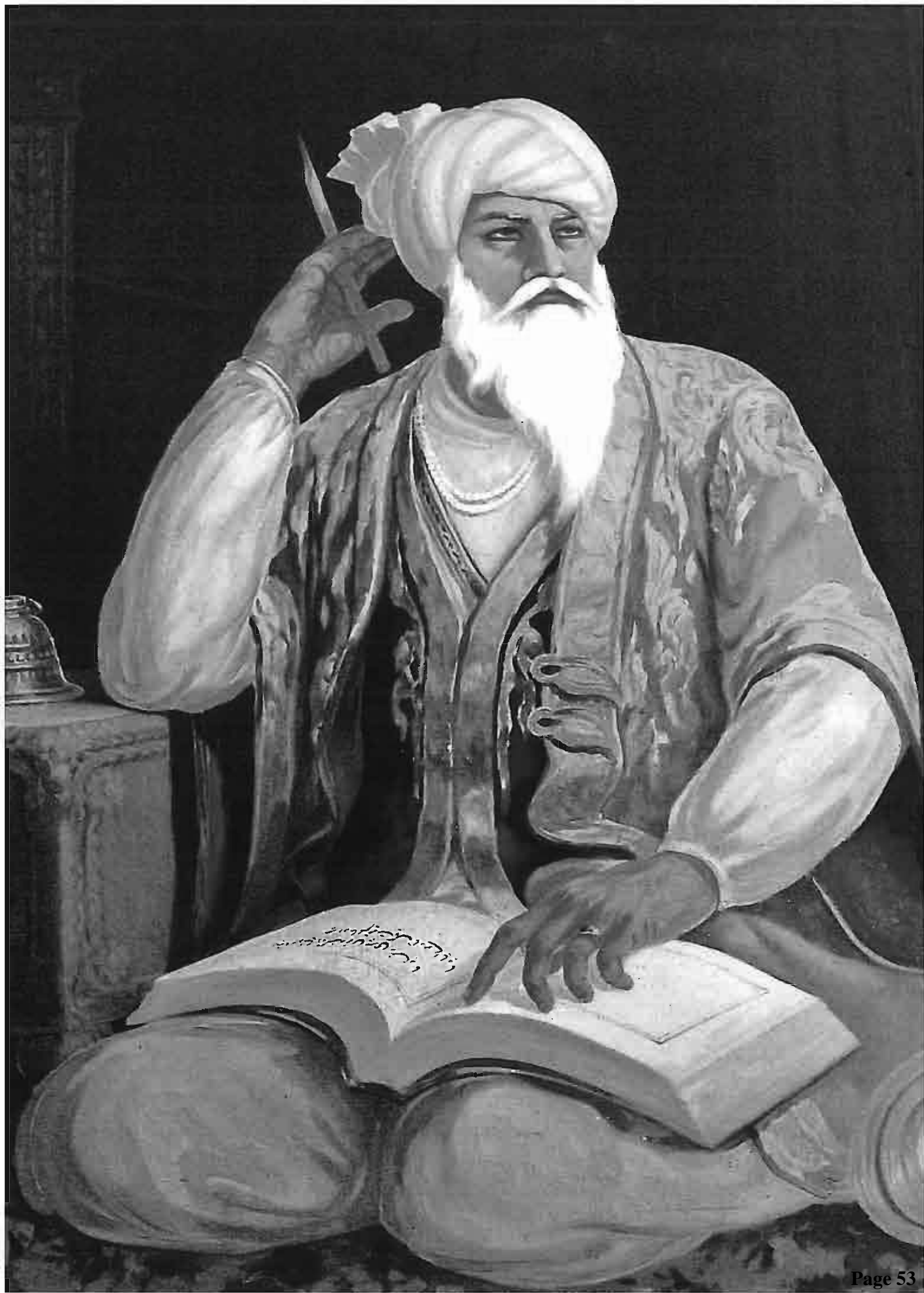
Before launching the attack, however, Ajmer Chand sent a letter to the Guru demanding his surrender, and asking him to pay rent for the land on which Anandpur had been built and promise to pay that rent in future also. If these terms were not acceptable to him, he should leave Anandpur and face the consequences.

In his reply to this letter, the Guru wrote back that the land of Anandpur was duly purchased by his father by paying for it. He advised the rajas to abandon pride and the take from him whatever they desired, for the Guru's house was open to all. He also invited them to have peace with the Khalsa and offered to act as a mediator.



Guru Gobind Singh
with regalia around.
Collection:
Smt. Kumkum Singh,
New Delhi.





Bhai Nand Lal (1633-1715)

One of the fifty two court-poets of Guru Gobind Singh, Nand Lal was the son of Diwan Chhajju Ram, the chief secretary of the Governor of Ghazni. An intelligent child, he acquired great efficiency in Persian and Arabic. He had inborn aptitude for poetry and began composing verse in Persian when he was only twelve years old. He became an orphan by the age of nineteen. Then he left Ghazni and migrated to India and settled down in Multan.

Multan was too hot compared with Ghazni, a place 7,000 ft. above sea level. So he went over to Delhi where he came to the notice of Prince Muazzam (later, Emperor Bahadur Shah) who employed him as his munshi. Once the King of Iran sent a letter to Aurangzeb. The reply drafted by Nand Lal was found better than any other drafted by many courtiers. Likewise, on another occasion, discussion arose about the explication of a Koranic verse. Prince Muazzam asked Nand Lal and he gave a very satisfying version. When Aurangzeb came to know that a Hindu had given that interpretation, he was upset and suggested that a man of such learning should be persuaded to embrace Islam.

Nand Lal's wife was a Sikh lady from whom he had heard the Gurus' hymns and also learnt Gurumukhi. So he decided to go

to Anandpur. At Anandpur, he lived in a small house and waited for the Guru to call him. He sent two poems in Persian describing the pangs of his separation from the Guru. The Guru sent for him. As he saw the Guru he was bedazzled by the Guru's personality. In a chaste Persian verse, he addressed him thus:

O, the Prince of Heaven,
the King of the Beauteous, pray, do not
become more beautiful.

I don't have strength to bear your grandeur.
Charmed and bewitched by your beauty,
I sacrifice myself unto you.

Nand Lal, thereupon, was admitted to the Guru's Court as a leading poet. He presented the Guru his collection of verse *Bandgi Nama* (The Book of Homage). The Guru changed its name to *Zindgi Nama* (The Book of Life).

After Bahadur Shah, during the time of the tyrant Farukh Saiyar, Nand Lal escaped to Multan and set up a school of learning there. He was the author of ten works – seven in Persian, two in Panjabi and one in Hindi. These included *Zindgi Nama*, *Diwan-e-Goya*, *Ganj Nama*, *Jot Bikas*, *Rahit Nama*, *Tankhah Nama*, *Dastur-ul-Insha* and *Arz-ul-Alfaz*. His poetry is free from artifices and rich in imagery. His works are considered as fine commentaries on the Guru's teachings as well as the Sikh way of life.



Bhai Nand Lal
Pleased with Bhai Nand Lal's selfless service for *langar* (free kitchen), the tenth Guru said, 'He is the benefactor of us all'. Guru Gobind Singh always called him Bhai Sahib (brother). About his writing, the Guru commented that 'in order to ferry across this sea of temporal world, his poems would come handy as oars'. His poetry, all in Persian except for *Joti Bigas*, which is in Punjabi, forms part of the approved Sikh canon and can be recited along with scriptural verse at Sikh religious *Diwans*.

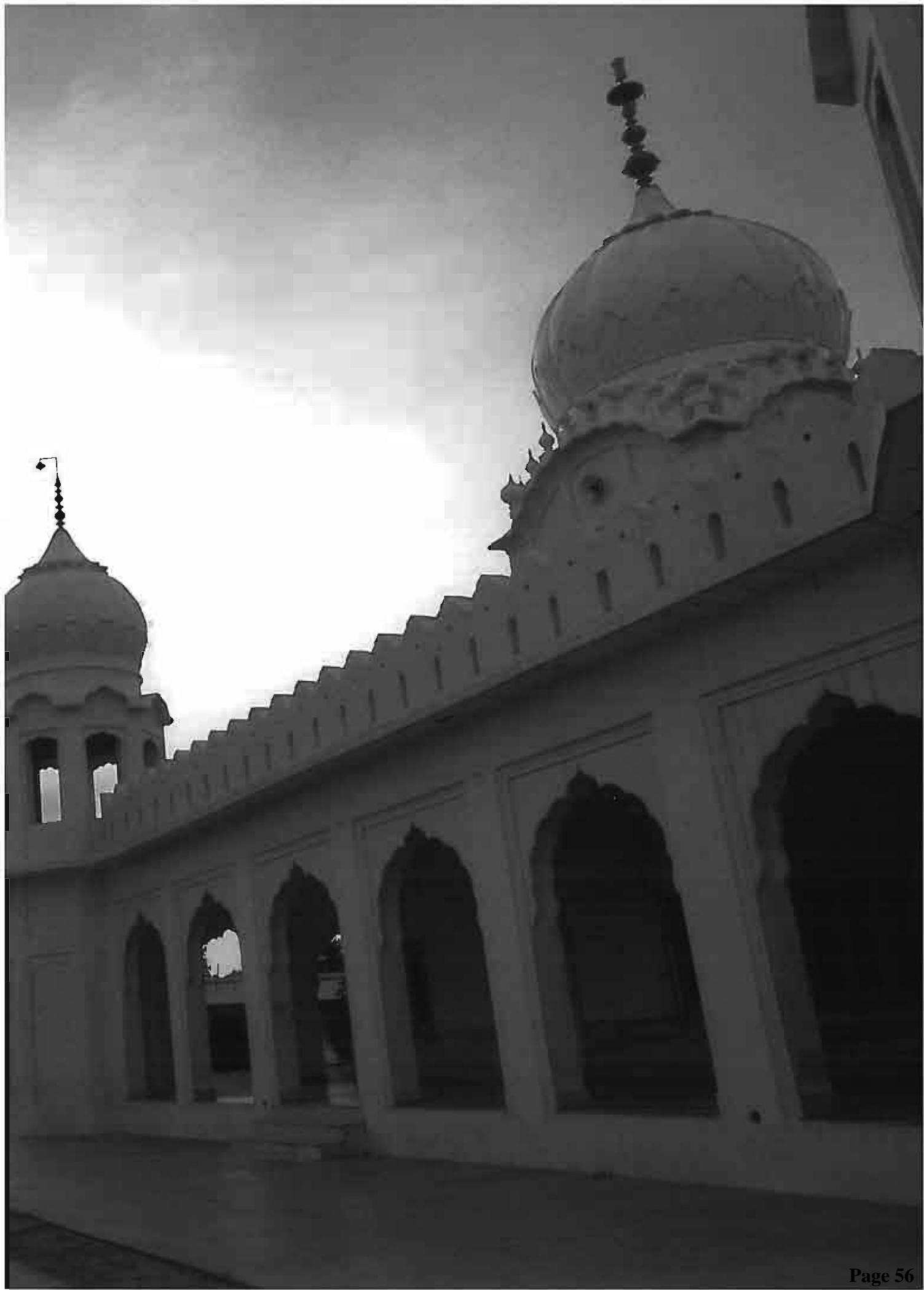
However, the rajas had no desire for reconciliation. Their only intention was to destroy the Guru and his followers. Anandpur received timely reinforcement by the arrival of 500 Sikhs from Majha, the heartland of Panjab. The Guru allocated the forces to defend the various forts and variety of weapons were given to them in accordance with their skills. In the meantime, the hill rajas had organised a tight siege of Anandpur. The siege lasted for many days but it did not seem to have affected the morale or even the resources of the Sikhs. In fact, they would make bold sorties at night, damage the opponents' camp and carry away their supplies. The troops of the rajas made several sallies in an attempt to break the fortifications, but every time they were beaten back with much loss of life. Whenever the Sikhs

made an attack, they caused much damage to the enemy forces. Ajit Singh, the Guru's eldest son, then barely 14, earned great laurels by his valorous feats. The rajas were greatly annoyed by the Sikh tactics. Eventually, they advanced to launch an attack in full force. Their first target was the fort of Lohgarh. An informant brought the news that the hill chiefs had planned to march the next morning behind an intoxicated elephant decked with steel armour who would smash the gate of the Lohgarh fort and make way for their forces to storm in. Hearing this, the Guru asked the powerful Duni Chand to fight the elephant the next morning. However, afraid of the order, Duni just fled away at night. In the morning not finding him, the Guru smiled and said, "Poor Duni Chand was afraid of death, but how can one

Gurdwara Fatehgarh Sahib

It is a square, pyramidal, three-storeyed, domed structure and is built at the place where the younger two of Guru Gobind Singh's four sons (Zorawar Singh and Fateh Singh aged 9 and 7 respectively) were savagely put to death at the behest of Wazir Khan, the *Faujdar* of Sirhind on 12 December, 1705.





avoid death when it really comes." Then he looked around and spotted Bachittar Singh, son of Mani Singh. He beckoned him and assigned him the task of confronting the elephant. He also gave Bachittar Singh a strong but flexible lance with which to meet the elephant. Bachittar Singh went out to meet the mighty drunk elephant and made such a powerful thrust of his spear that it pierced first the protective plate and then even the forehead of the elephant. The animal panicked and ran back trampling under its feet quite a number of hill soldiers. When Duni Chand, the deserter reached Amritsar, his home, he was ostracized by his community for his cowardly deed. Shortly thereafter, that lonely man was stung by a cobra and died.

In the ensuing open battle, heavy losses were suffered by both sides. Raja Kesri Chand of Jasval got killed. The Rajas of Handur and Kangra were severely injured. The Rajas had as their allies some Ranghar and Gujjar tribes. Their leader, Jagatullah, also lost his life. These losses severely demoralised the allied forces, they could no longer hold the siege, and had to flee for safety.

Ajmer Chand, the Raja of Bilaspur, was seething with rage at the shame and disgrace he had repeatedly suffered at the hands of the Sikhs. He quickly enlisted the help of Faujdars of Sirhind and Lahore, and mounted another desperate attack on Anandpur. For a while, it appeared as if the allies had the upper hand.

But the Sikhs closed their ranks and repulsed the allied hordes. The Raja of Bilaspur arrived with a strong contingent of battle-proud soldiers, but the Sikhs fought with great vigour and the Raja was compelled to retreat shame-facedly. On the Sikh side also many fell including Sahib Singh who had distinguished himself as a valiant fighter in many battles.

A battle averted

Raja Ajmer Chand of Bilaspur then began to send friendly messages to the Guru seeking to make peace with him. The Guru generously accepted his offer and agreed even to let a representative of the Raja stay at Anandpur. In reality the 'representative' was no envoy;

he was a spy. Even so, the Guru treated him with benignity and looked after his needs with good care. Other hill rulers also began making conciliatory moves following Ajmer's example. Several of them even met him in person at Rawalsar where the Guru had gone along with his family to attend the annual fair of that place. They were surprised at the courtesy and kindness they received from the Guru. They entreated him to forgive and forget their past offences. Having no malice against anyone the Guru believed their entreaties. Rather he invited them to his camp where they received a cordial reception.

Ajmer Chand, however, was not genuine in his conciliation with the Guru. He was looking for an opportunity to strike at the Guru's forces again. An opportunity appeared to have arrived when two Mughal generals, Said Beg and Alif Khan passed by on their way from Lahore to Delhi. Each had five thousand soldiers with them. Ajmer Chand approached them and was able to persuade them to assault the Guru and promised to pay them Rs. 1,000 per day for this. The generals agreed and even took a detour toward Anandpur, but before they could get there, Said Beg having heard stories of the Guru's piety and holiness became his admirer. He detached himself from the invading army and decided to fight on the Guru's side. Alif Khan did not have the courage to go ahead without Said. So, the contest never happened. Said Beg broke with the Emperor and spent the rest of his life with the Guru. He gave all his savings to the Sikhs and became their ally in the Sikh struggle against the Mughals.

Apart from the said general, there were many other Muslims who were with the Guru and many of them fought on his side. For example, there was the famous Pir Budhu Shah and his disciples who fought for the Guru. Another significant example is that of Ghyas ud Din, who was a friend of Bhai Nand Lal.

Bhai Nand Lal in those days was in the service of Prince Muazzam, the eldest son of Aurangzeb. The prince was highly impressed with his scholarship but thought that such a capable and learned man should not be allowed to remain a non-Muslim and desired

to convert him to Islam. Nand Lal, somehow, came to know of the Prince's intention and decided to flee to Anandpur. He confided in Ghyas ud Din who himself offered to come with him and put himself under the guidance of such a spiritual stalwart.

Another attack at Anandpur

Anandpur, faced another attack not much later. Ajmer Chand came with a horde of 10,000 men hand-picked from the armies of a number of hill states. At that time, there were not more than 800 Sikhs to defend the city. They sized up the situation and concluded that their best chance was to rush out and make a sudden charge. It was so unexpected for the raiders that confusion came to beset their ranks. Ajmer Chand was the first to take to his heels. Other rajas, however, stuck on and waged a furious battle. Alam Singh and Ude Singh two brave fighters not only furthered the lustre of their valour, they actually demoralised the attackers and the hillmen were forced to withdraw.

As if all these attacks on Anandpur were not enough, under imperial orders, another host under the command of Said Khan came crashing with the hope of humiliating the Sikhs to submission. At that time most of the Sikhs had gone home to be with their families. Only around five hundred Sikhs were left behind with the Guru. Even though they were far outnumbered, their spirit was fighting fit. They rushed forth into the thick of the battle and fought with surprising alacrity and vigorous tenacity. There were two faithful Muslims among them. They were Said Beg and Maimun Khan. The latter fell fighting. The Guru charged his blue steed and dashed through the ranks where the Mughal commander Said Khan was. The Khan had heard about the Guru from his sister. He had no difficulty in recognising him. Seeing him, peace descended on his heart and he altogether forgot about fighting. He alighted from his horse and touched the Guru's stirrup as a token of his homage to him. He could not fight any more. Thus the contest was over. He did not mind bringing his military career to a close. He spent the rest of his life seeking communion with God.

The Last battle of Anandpur

The serialized repulses suffered by the Governors of Delhi, Jammu, Sirhind and Lahore as well as the hill rajas disheartened them very much and caused them great concern. They sent Aurangzeb a communication making him aware of the danger of the growing power of Guru Gobind Singh. They stated that the Emperor's conquests in the South might result in loss of the North West of his Empire. This upset Aurangzeb who issued instructions to his governors and hill rajas suggesting that the Guru must be compelled to evacuate Anandpur either by force or by fraud and then he should be captured or killed. He also wrote a personal letter to the Guru which held out a mild threat. He wrote:

"There is only one Emperor. Thy religion and mine are the same. Come to me, by all means, otherwise I shall be angry and go to thee. If thou come, thou shalt be treated as holy men are treated by monarchs. I have obtained this sovereignty from God. Be well advised and thwart not my wishes"
(Macauliffe. v. p. 165)

This letter was brought by a Qazi to whom the Guru handed over the following reply:

"My brother, the Sovereign, the One who hath made thee emperor hath sent me into the world to do justice. But thou hast forgotten His mandate and practised hypocrisy. Wherefore how can I be on good terms with you who pursuest the Hindus with blind hatred? Thou recognisest not that the people belong to God and not to the Emperor, and yet thou seekest to destroy their religion."
(Macauliffe v. p. 165)

The Guru could size up the exigency and wanted the Sikhs to face it unitedly. So he issued a number of letters to his Sikh *sangats*. The translation of one of these letters, addressed to Bhais Sukhya, Mukhya and Parsa, as an example, is reproduced hereunder:

"The Guru would take care of all his disciples. Repeat "Guru, Guru". You will have the best in life. The entire community is my Khalsa. Come with cavaliers, footmen, gunners





ਪਗ ਕੋ ਬਲ ਰਕਬ ਪਰ ਕਰਿਕੈ ਉਛਲਯੋ ਆਸਨ ਛੋਰਾ।

ਸਭਿ ਸਰੀਰ ਕੋ ਓਜ ਸੰਭਰਿਕੈ ਹਯ ਫਾਂਦਯੋ ਗਜ ਓਰਾ॥

ਸੈਫ ਬਚਾਇ ਚਲਾਇ ਸੁ ਬਰਛਾ ਤਵਾ ਪੁਲਾਈ ਫੋਰਾ।

ਬਰਯੋ ਜਾਇ ਗਜ ਮਸਤਕ ਮੈਂ ਜਬ ਪੁਨ ਕਰ ਜੁਗ ਕਰਿ ਜੋਰਾ॥

Bhai Bachittar Singh joined the order of the *Khalsa* on the historic Baisakhi day, March 30, 1699 and became prominent during the first battle of Anandpur against the hill chieftains. He was selected by Guru Gobind Singh to face a drunken elephant brought forth by them to batter down the gate of the Lohgarh Fort. As the elephant sallied forth Bachittar Singh riding his horse encountered it and made a powerful thrust with his spear piercing the plate and injuring the animal in the forehead. The wounded elephant ran back creating havoc in the besiegers' ranks.

and daring youth. Every Sikh young man coming to pay respects would be blessed with prosperity. He would flourish fully well. The Guru would fulfill all his desires. Come for a *darshan*."

(Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs* i. pp 288-289)

While the Guru was summoning his Sikhs to come over to Anandpur, the anxious Emperor had issued orders to the Governors of Sirhind and Lahore to lead an expedition against the Sikhs and capture their Guru.

In the winter of 1704, the festival of Diwali had attracted a large number of Sikhs to Anandpur. The number further swelled in response to the invitation letters that the Guru had sent to the Sikh *sangats*. When news arrived that a vast horde was marching upon them, their spirits became high with the prospect of fighting the forces of tyranny, and by good luck, winning the crown of martyrdom.

Another development then took place. The hill rajas who had long been seething with the indignity suffered in every battle with the Sikhs, and who had long been contriving a combined campaign with the Mughal forces on a large scale happily offered the Mughal generals their armed support in a meeting held at Ropar. The vastly swollen allied army, under the command of Wazir Khan, Nawab of Sirhind, advanced thundering through the valley. On their way to Anandpur they also enlisted the support of Rangarh and Gujjar tribes.

In Anandpur, the Sikhs saw to it that none among them remained unarmed. The supplies were also collected and stored. The Guru addressed them in very inspiring words. He repeated to them the following verse out of his own compositions:

Blessed are they in the world
Who have God's Name on their lips,
And zest for war in their heart.
The body is ephemeral and shall
not live forever...
Make this body a house of resignation;
Light for yourself the lamp of
your understanding.

Take into your hands the broom
of divine knowledge,
And sweep away the dirt of timidity.
— Krishnavtar 24:92

The Guru divided his army into six contingents, each roughly of 500 men. One each was placed in the five forts and the sixth was kept in reserve. The Guru had two guns mounted which killed nine hundred men of the invading army in the first day and brought havoc in the enemy ranks as the Sikhs had taken positions. In addition was the devastation brought about by the horsemen supported by musket fire by the infantry from behind the ramparts. The commanders of the allied troops were dazed by such swift action. The pace of the battle became fiercer, when the allies tried to storm the fortress. When, at sunset, the armies were disengaged, the tally of their dead stupefied them. They could not believe that what the hill rajas had described as "inferior rabble" could unleash such brave and ordered action. In fact, casualties on both sides were heavy. The Guru himself took part in the operations so did his son Ajit Singh. The Sikhs too had fought as they had never fought before.

After the end of the fighting that day, some of his men complained to the Guru that a Sikh called Kanhaiya had been giving water besides to the wounded Sikhs, also to the wounded enemy men and thus reviving them. The Guru asked Kanhaiya about it. Kanhaiya said, "What they say may well be true, because I was giving water to every one who I thought might die of thirst. I could not distinguish between the Mughal and the Sikh. All I could see was the Guru's face in everyone." The Guru was immensely pleased with his reply and told the complainants that Kanhaiya was the one who had rightly understood the mission of the Khalsa.

The Mughal generals sized up that in straight fighting they were going to suffer great losses of life. Such a situation might be unsustainable. So they thought that they would rather lay a siege to the town and cut off all supplies to it so that the Sikhs are put to hardships of hunger and thirst which would compe



Bhai Kanhaiya, the founder of *Seva Panthis*, used to serve drinking water to the wounded Turk soldiers. A complaint reached Guru Gobind Singh. On enquiry, Bhai Kanhiya replied, "I see you alone my Master in every person".

them to surrender. The siege continued for months. The food got depleted and the Sikhs had to fall back on eating leaves of their trees. Their water supply was also cut. Therefore, while two Sikhs went to fetch water from a well, two musketeers from behind provided them protection. The hardships became severer day by day. Some of them felt that they could hold no longer. There were signs of discontent among some of them. The Guru asked them to declare themselves. Forty of them signed a disclaimer. They were allowed to leave. The remaining said, they would stay with the Guru through thick and thin.

In the meantime, messages started coming from the Mughal generals and the rajas as also from the Emperor that if the Guru left Anandpur, the siege would be lifted and the armies would withdraw. By their holy books they vowed that the Sikhs shall be provided trouble-free passage. The Guru's mind was as resolute as ever, but the sight of the suffering Sikhs and the solemn promises of the enemy for a safe exit moved him to leave the town.

Betrayal despite vows

Having come out, the Guru had not gone very far when he was set upon by a large force of those who had vowed him safe exit.

A melee followed on the banks of the Sarsa river in the dark night and in pouring rain. When the day dawned, over the dead and dying, people were stricken with fear, but the Guru held his usual morning service. Unperturbed in the midst of the booming guns and hissing arrows, he sang the praises of the Lord. It came to the notice of all that much of the Guru's baggage including some very important manuscripts and also the new recension of the *Pothi Sahib*, had been washed away by the swollen waters of Sarsa. The Guru was separated from a part of his family. However, he was able to make his way to Chamkaur.

A faithful Sikh of Delhi offered to lead the Guru's wives to safety. His two younger sons, Zorawar Singh and Fateh Singh, accompanied by their grandmother, Mata Gujari, took shelter with Gangu, a Brahmin who was an old servant of theirs. He, however, betrayed them to the

Breast plate of Guru Gobind Singh.
Courtesy: Captain Amarinder Singh, Patiala.

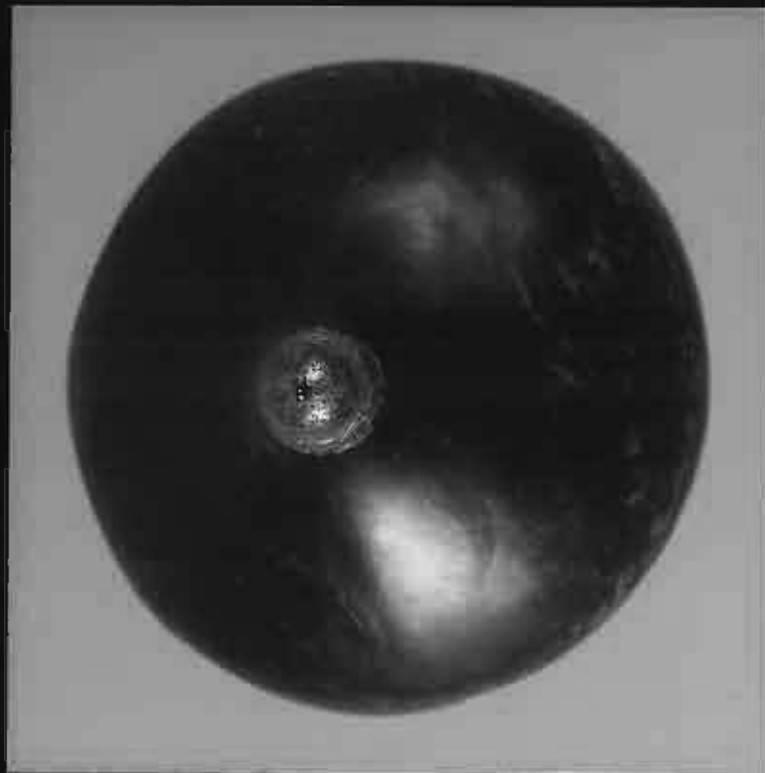
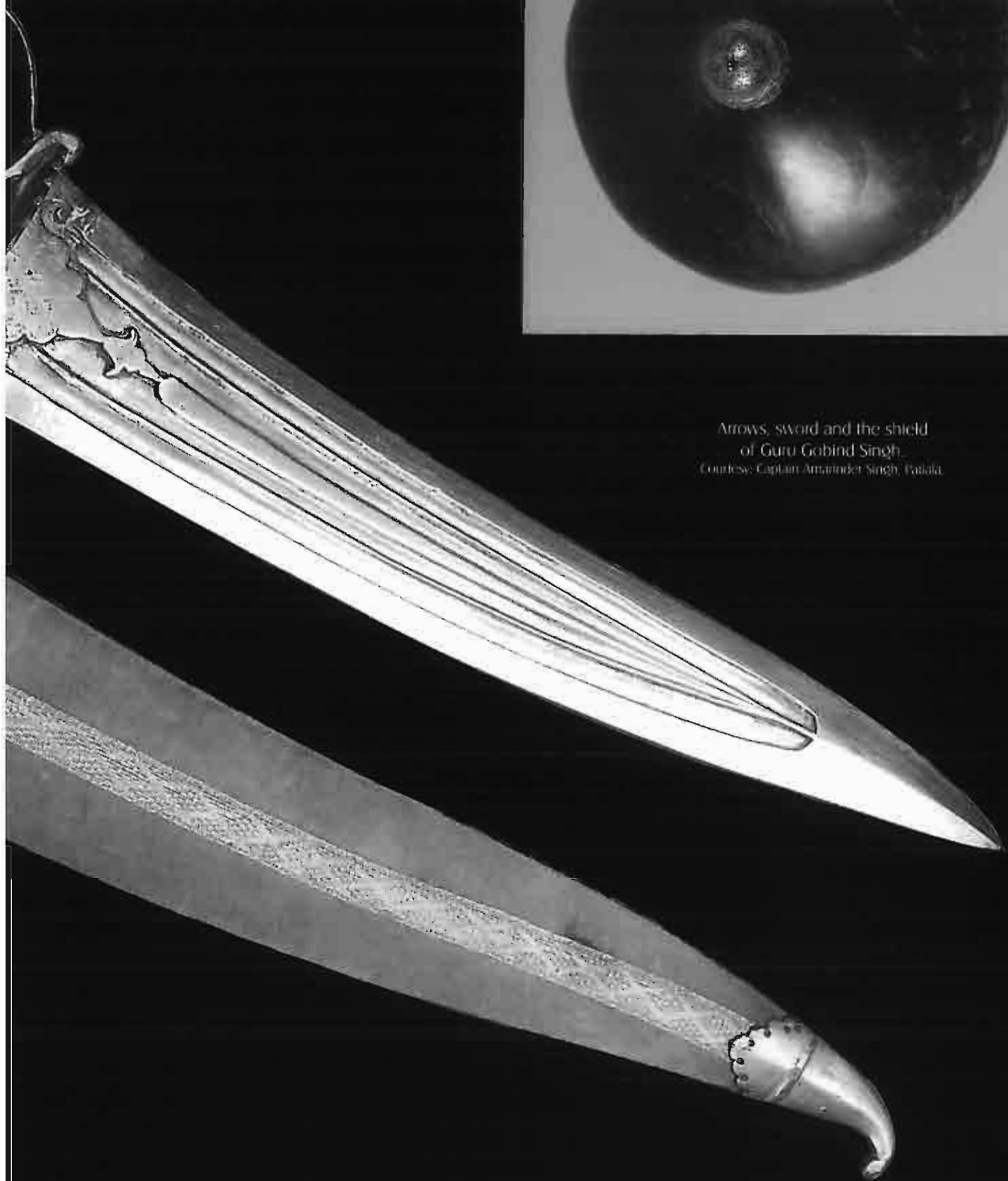












Arrows, sword and the shield
of Guru Gobind Singh.
Courtesy: Captain Amarinder Singh, Patiala.

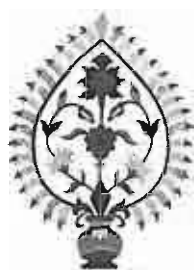
nearest official in Morinda who handed them over to Wazir Khan, the Governor of Sirhind. The Guru's own party was reduced to a bare forty Sikhs plus his two elder sons Ajit Singh and Jujhar Singh.

The troops in pursuit of him closed upon him but the Guru turned into village Chamkaur and took shelter in a mud-walled house belonging to a Sikh of his. He arranged for the defence of that small improvised fortress by splitting his very meagre force into four groups to look after the four sides. However, guns from below and arrows from the roofs of neighboring buildings played havoc on the forty odd incarcerated in that mud house. In a few hours on that day, which happened to be the Guru's 39th birthday, his two tender, teen-aged, princes, Ajit Singh and Jujhar Singh, three of the five Beloved Ones and thirty two other Khalsa, laid down their lives at the altar of faith (Bhagat Lakshman Singh, *Sikh Martyrs*). As the darkness of the night descended the Guru was left with only five disciples – Daya Singh, Dharam Singh, Man Singh, Sangat Singh and Sant Singh. They reminded

the Guru that at the great initiation ceremony of 1699, he had vested the power of the Guru in the 'five'. "By virtue of that power, at this critical moment we order you, Gobind Singh, in the interest of the Panth, to escape away from here". Daya Singh and Dharam Singh the two Beloved Ones and another Sikh Man Singh were to accompany him. The remaining two would stay behind to continue the fight. In obedience, the Guru emerged out of his 'fortress' and extinguished with his arrows the night-torches of the besieging troops and escaped unhindered.

The battle of Chamkaur took place on December 22, 1704.

While this happened in Chamkaur, the Guru's mother and his younger sons were ordered to be confined to a cold tower in Sirhind in the freezing night of severe winter. In the morning the boys were produced before the Subadar. In the court one of the ministers Suchanand told them that their father, two elder brothers and all their companions had been killed in Chamkaur. They were also told that their only hope of escape was to bow



A minor seasonal tributary of the Sutlej, Sarsa being close to the Shivalik foothills, is subject to sudden floodings during the rains. Guru Gobind Singh decided to split his forces into two. While a part of the force was to engage the enemy, the others were to get across the river as best as they could. Many died; the survivors, sure of Guru's safety, escaped in different directions.



before the Nawab and accept Islam. Zorawar Singh spoke with a determined voice, "We bow only before God and the Guru. As for accepting Islam, none can force us to renounce the faith of our forefathers."

They were then promised all kinds of gifts, estates, and beautiful girls. They replied, "We seek neither estate nor position; we can choose to lay down our lives but not give up our faith. None of your offers can tempt us. No worldly authority is lasting. Your cruelties shall pave the way for your own ruin."

The Nawab was mad with wrath and wanted to give them the severest punishment. The Nawab of Malerkotla, however, pleaded for the children and said that they were innocent ones too young to be punished under any law. But on the advice of the Qazi, the Subadar ordered that they be bricked up in a wall to be suffocated therein to death.

According to another version, "the children stood firm in their resolution against apostasy. In anger, they pushed down the temporary structure built in mud and bricks. Thereupon

they were beheaded on December 27, 1704, and their bodies were thrown away."

(Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*. p. 299)

For Mata Gujari, news of their martyrdom proved to be a fatal shock.

Todar Mal, a wealthy Sikh came to know of the martyrdom of the younger princes of Guru Gobind Singh and his revered mother. He hastened to the Nawab's court to obtain permission for cremation of their dead bodies. The Nawab told him that he would grant his request if he paid by spreading as many gold coins over the piece of land that is required for cremation. Todar Mal accepted the Nawab's terms and made the requisite payment.

Wanderings in disguise

The story of the wanderings of the Guru in disguise is full of hair-breadth escapes. He made towards Machhiwara jungle. In the stark darkness, his companions got separated from him. Alone, he trudged through the thorny desolation of the forest. For days he had



After the martyrdom of two Sahibzadas in fierce battle of Chamkaur, Guru Gobind Singh reached the forest of Machhiwara, rested there under a *jand* tree using a clog of earth as pillow and composed *Militer piare nu haal muridan da kehina*.





Gurdwara Parivar Vichora Sahib

Standing on the right bank of Sarsa river, a tributary of the Sutlej, 12 kilometres north of Ropar commemorates the fateful battle and desperate river crossing on the night of December 5 – 6, 1705.





Baba Ajit Singh, riding a white horse, fighting fearlessly in the battle of Chamkaur.



nothing to eat except leaves of shrubs and trees. With his listless frame on a cold wintry night he lay on the bare ground under the canopy of open skies in the midst of the desolation of that forest with nothing but a clog of earth to rest his head on. There he extemporised the following verse:

My Dear Friend! let me tell you
how your loved ones fare.
Soft beds are nothing but
torment without You.
High mansions but sting like serpents.
The goblet pierces like a lance,
and the cup strikes as a dagger.
Victuals shear like a butcher's crooked
knife. With You, O Love, I'd prefer to
sleep on the bare ground,
But cursed would be living with
those one loves not.
— Shabad Hazare 6:6:1

One day, two Pathans Nabi Khan and Ghani Khan, who had been under obligation to the Guru, noticed him lying in that jungle. His clothes, they saw, tattered and his feet blistered. They knew that the imperial army was in pursuit of him and anyone who was found rendering help to the Guru will have to pay with his life. Yet, they decided to take the risk and brought him to their village. A Sikh woman who was their neighbour, had woven a piece of cloth which she had wanted to present to the Guru. That she brought over. On the suggestion of Nabi Khan and Ghani Khan, it was dyed indigo blue and a dress of the style of the robe of Muslim fakirs, was made out of it for the Guru. By then, the Guru's companions who had got separated from him, tracking him reached there. The Guru was put in a palanquin lifted by the two Khans and by Dharam Singh and Man Singh. Daya Singh whisked a *chauri* over him from behind. The one in the palanquin was to be introduced as *Uch ka Pir*, a great religious leader from Uch, a place in the Multan District of Panjab.

A contingent of Mughal troops intercepted the palanquin and asked the escort many searching questions. Not satisfied still, they

summoned Qazi Pir Mohammad from the town. The Qazi was the former teacher of the Guru who had taught him Persian. He would not let the Guru fall into the hands of the rulers who were known to be eager for his blood. He admonished the soldiers for obstructing the journey of the high priest and asked the officer to let him proceed without hindrance. Apologizing, the commander obeyed. The descendants of these friends of the Guru still retain with them the autograph granted them by the Guru and hold it with great respect.

The Guru resumed his journey and reached Hehar, where Nabi Khan and Ghani Khan took leave of him. Next, he reached Jatpura, where the Muslim ruler, Rai Kalha, received him with genuine warmth and respect.



It was there that a messenger of the Rai brought the Guru the unfortunate news of the martyrdom of his younger sons and his mother. Hearing this, the Guru uprooted a shrub with his arrow and said, "Thus shall the tyrants be rooted out!"

The Guru bestowed his favour on his host, Rai Kalha, and gifted him his sword and Ganga Sagar before departing. He was greatly appreciative of the merciful interposition of the Nawab of Malerkotla and copiously blessed him in absentia.

The Guru's next halt was at Dina, a village near Nabha. As news of the Guru's presence there percolated on to the Sikhs, they started coming to visit him. The Guru was particularly pleased to receive two brothers, Param Singh

and Dharam Singh. They were the sons of Bhai Rupa who had received benediction from Guru Hargobind that the Sikh faith shall ever abide in his family. The descendants of Param Singh and Dharam Singh have been known as Bhais of Bagarian and have through generations been esteemed for their learning and piety.

It was at Dina that the Guru received a conciliatory letter from Aurangzeb in response to the one addressed to him by the Guru after the battle of Chamkaur. The Guru's letter was in Persian and titled *Fatehnamah*. Only portions of it, just twenty three and a half couplets, have been discovered so far.

Aurangzeb had invited the Guru to his court at Aurangabad. The Guru said, he would not wait upon such a faithless and



Uch ka Pir
Guru Gobind Singh



From Fatehnamah

انجمنہ شہنامہ اورنگ زیب
یادگار بیاد بادشاہ

You don't deserve the name Aurangzeb because the
'adornor of the throne' must not practice fraud.

برجیاد و کرم و کرم و کرم
زادشہ شہنامہ اورنگ

Let the two armies stand in the field at
a distance between them.

چند کرم و کرم و کرم
یادگار بیاد بادشاہ

What does it matter if a jackal, through deceit and
deception has killed two cubs of a lion.

چند کرم و کرم و کرم
یادگار بیاد بادشاہ

آلہ کرم و کرم و کرم
یادگار بیاد بادشاہ

I shall come into the battlefield all by myself, you
may come with two horsemen.

چند کرم و کرم و کرم
یادگار بیاد بادشاہ

چند کرم و کرم و کرم
یادگار بیاد بادشاہ

I have lost faith in your vows and have no other
options than to ply sword.

چند کرم و کرم و کرم
یادگار بیاد بادشاہ

چند کرم و کرم و کرم
یادگار بیاد بادشاہ

Come into the field yourself, be it with a sword and a
hatchet, but do not ruin the people of the Creator.

بمکمل از تحریر علی و ابی
عبداللہ بہت بڑا اور بہتر

When all modes of redressing a wrong have failed,
raising a sword is pious and just.

منم گشتہ ام کہ سیدان پروردگار
کائنات پرستند و دروغ پرستان

I wanted to eradicate the misguided hillsfolk.
For they worship idols which I destroy.

چنان کہ عطا الہیہ شایان
مسا دولت و دریا شایان

He who blessed you with an empire,
conferred on me the wealth of faith.

چند روزی کا شعلہ فروجا گئی
گرا آتش وہاں لایب و شایان

How wise! You try to blow out a spark.
But set a fire ablaze instead.

ہزاروں قسم سوگند کا اٹھا
مراقبہ نہ کیا اور کبھی

Were you to take a hundred oaths on Quran,
I would not trust you in the least.

چرا کہ کربلہ کی چکان گشت ہوا
کہ لایق نہ تھا نہ چسپندہ ہوا

What if you have killed my four sons.
For the coiled serpent still survives.

treacherous king. In response to the Emperor's invitation to the Guru to meet him, the Guru wrote *Zafarnamah*, the 'Epistle of Victory'. It consists of 111 stanzas in chaste Persian written in the exalted mood of righteous fervour. It falls into three clearly marked parts. The first part (12 couplets) is an invocation to God. The second part (verses 13 to 88) chastises the Emperor for his failure as a ruler, for his bigotry and treachery upon an oath of Koran. In the third part the Guru highlights some of the qualities of Aurangzeb, but tells him that the lack of human feelings in him ruin all his qualities. The Guru invited the Emperor to come and meet him at Kangar, close to where he was. He assured him that he would be absolutely safe and shall incur no danger because the entire clan of Brars, suzerain in that area, was fully under his (the Guru's) command at Kot Kapura. The Guru got news that Wazir Khan's fresh forces had been mobilized against him. He chose to go towards Khidrana on the borders of a sandy desert. A pond of water was also there which would supply water to his men. There was no water available for miles around. There the Guru set up his camp.

The forty, who deserted the Guru, when they reached homes, their women put them to shame. A young woman, Bhago, was determined to wipe out this ignominy. She collected all the forty deserters and with them moved towards Khidrana to meet the Guru and seek his pardon. It was really a tender scene as those Sikhs greeted the Guru, with *Waheguru ji ka Khalsa, Waheguru ji ki Fateh*. The eyes of all were wet, some out of penitence.

The Mughal forces were hotly in pursuit. So positions had to be taken expeditiously. The Guru along with the advance party that had accompanied him, posted himself on a sand hillock. The Sikhs that had joined late halted by the water pond. To distract the pursuing force from the Guru's camp, the latter unfolded their sheets and spread them out on the surrounding trees and bushes. That, they looked like a big army camp. When Wazir Khan's forces arrived they opened a deadly attack on the Sikhs. The Sikhs fought back firmly. Those who had been pardoned by the Guru for their previous faithlessness, now wished to die for his cause. Besides the still resistance from the Sikhs there, what could



Mai Bhago

She symbolised the virtues of chastity, faith and courage. She mocked at the timidity of those who, smitten by the ravages of a prolonged siege, disclaimed Guru Gobind Singh at Anandpur and returned to their homes. She charged them with cowardice and brought them back to fight against the army of Wazir Khan of Sirhind at Khidrana, now Muktsar, in 1705 A.D.



founded the Mughal soldiers more were the arrows of Guru Gobind Singh shot from his vantage point. There was reckless action in which both sides stood firm. Wazir Khan's troops seemed to have fought to exhaustion. Parched with thirst and sick with fatigue the Mughal troops were compelled to retire.

As fighting ended, the Guru came forth to see what had taken place at the scene of action. He found his Sikhs martyred almost to a man. He went about the entire field, wiped the faces of the deceased warriors and showered blessings on each one of the martyrs. Yet, there was one Sikh still almost at his last gasp. The Guru sat down beside him, put his head into his own lap and placing his affectionate hand over his forehead asked him if he had any wish the Guru could fulfill. "Having had your *darshan* before dying", said Mahan Singh, "I have no other wish. But it would be great satisfaction to me if the Guru, who had pardoned me and my companions, may also cancel the deed of desertion that we had signed before leaving Anandpur." The Guru tore off the paper that he had been carrying on his person through all the troublesome months. The forty dead were blessed by the Guru as the *Chali Mukte* or the 'Forty Saved Ones'. A Sikh temple in their memory has come up there and both the temple and the town around it, in their memory are called Muktsar.

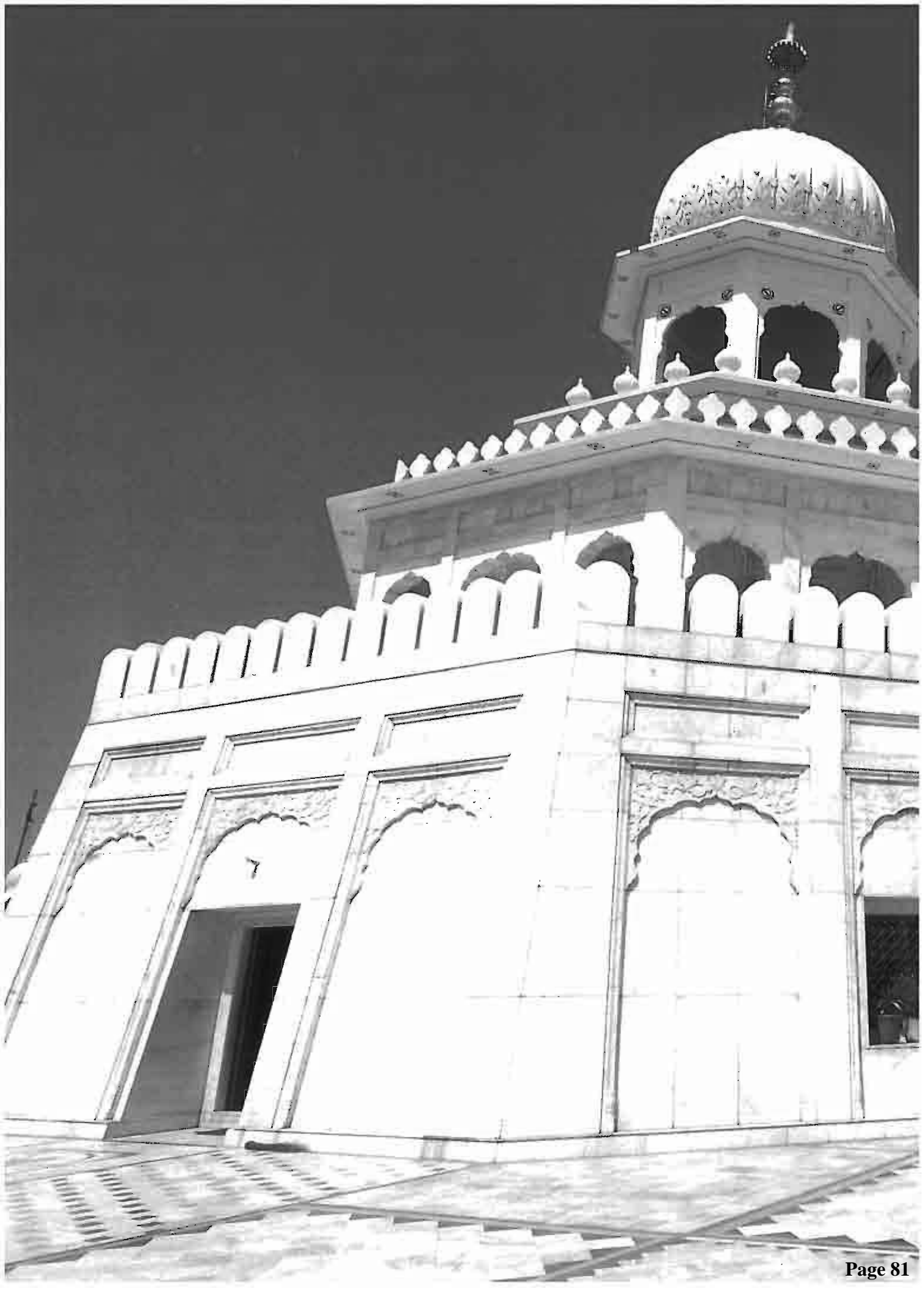
Repose at Damdama

After leaving Khidrana, Guru Gobind Singh continued the tour of Malwa territory. Passing through several villages, he arrived at Lakhi Jungle, a forest between Bhatinda and Kot Kapura. This forest, on account of the Guru's presence, soon became alive not only with the tramp of pilgrims but also with the musical chanting of the Lord's Name and His praises. Sikhism took new roots in this region where thousands came to pay homage to the Guru and were gratified to receive the gift of baptism from him. This place became a second site of inspiration after Anandpur. Here even a Muslim fakir, Ibrahim, received the baptism and avowed his loyalty to the new faith. He was named Ajmer Singh and became a close associate of the Guru.

Resuming his journey, the Guru coursed through several villages and halted near Talvandi Sabo. He got atop a mound that was leveled up; there removed his body armour, and sat down on the flattened mound to take rest. This spot, since, has come to be known as *Damdama Sahib* or the 'Revered Site of Repose'. The Guru stayed there for a little over nine months.

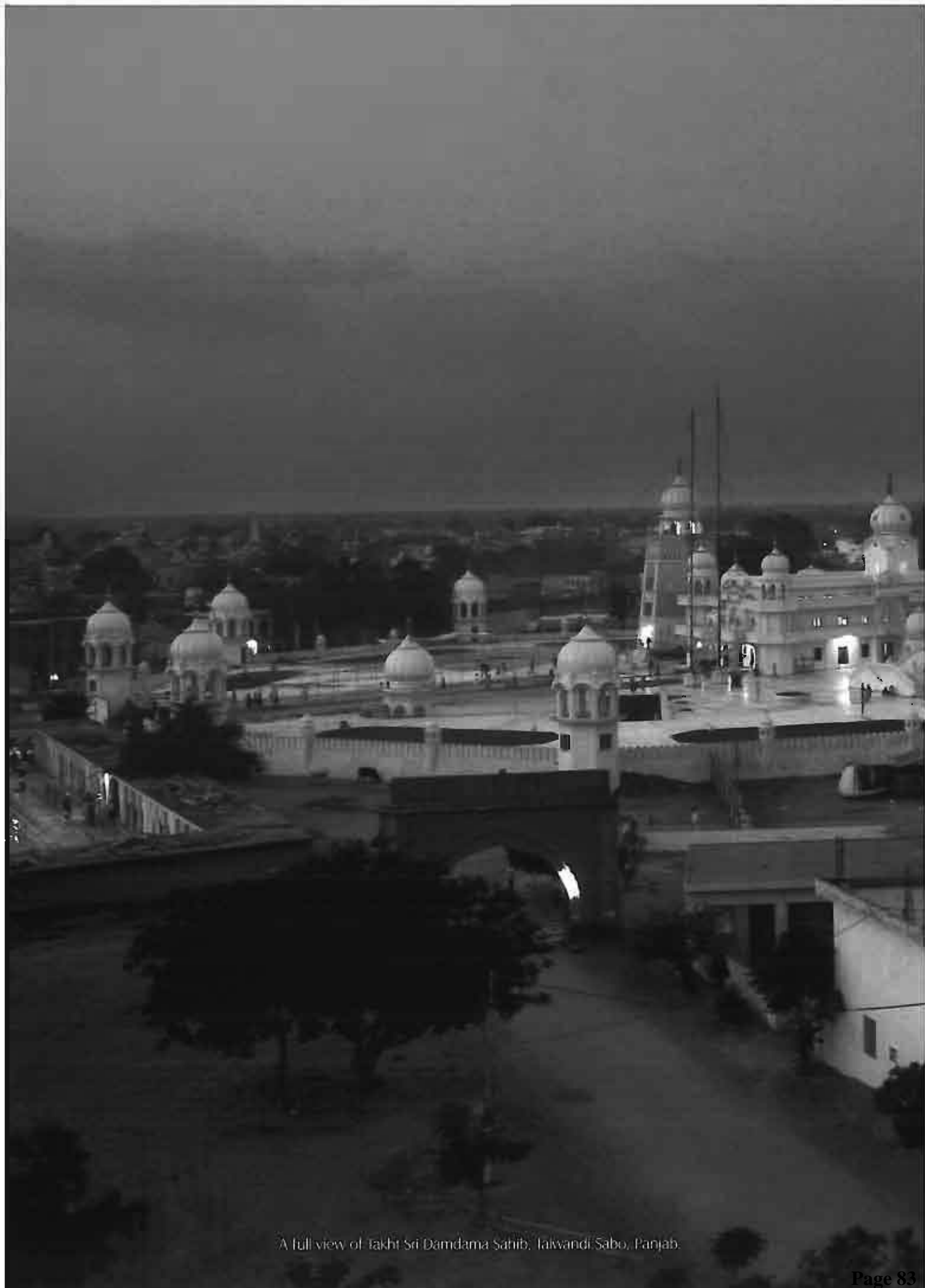
Dalla, the village landlord, was one of the followers of the Guru. One day he expressed regret that he was not able to serve the Guru during his troubled days. Had he known, he would have sent his men who are well trained and dependable. At that moment a group of Sikhs arrived from Lahore and brought a musket as a present for the Guru. It was an admirable weapon and the Guru expressed desire to test it straightaway. He asked Dalla if he would be able to get two of his brave men over for testing the range of the musket. For Dalla, that appeared an absolutely strange wish of the Guru and said that hardly any of his men would offer to be targets for testing the range of the musket. At that moment the Guru spotted two of his Sikhs standing at a distance tying their turbans. He sent them word. Both came running, wrapping their turbans hurriedly. Each tried to outdo the other to be the first one to receive the Guru's bullet. They both stood facing the musket trying to push oneself before the other to receive the bullet. Dalla was repentant for having spoken so vainly about his men. The Guru told Dalla, he did not want to deprecate him or his men, but only to show him that those who have taken *Amrit*, the 'Sacrament of Steel', had no fear, not even of death. Dalla then himself took the baptism and became Dal Singh. The seekers for *Amrit* were getting more and more numerous by the day. According to an estimate more than a hundred thousand people must have imbibed the elixir and joined the fraternity of the Khalsa.

The Guru, for a brief period went to Bhatinda, but soon returned to Damdama Sahib. Mata Sundri and Mata Sahib Devan joined him from Delhi. They burst into tears recalling the death of their four sons. The Guru



A close view of Takht Sri Damdama Sahib, Talwandi Sabo, Panjab.





A full view of Takht Sri Damdama Sahib, Talwandi Sabo, Punjab.





gave them solace saying they earned a worthy death. "Do not grieve because you have lost four sons," said the Guru, and pointing towards the congregation, said, "Those four died so that these thousands should survive."

Many poets and bards of the Guru's court also came there for a reunion. Bhai Mani Singh, a reputed scholar was also among them. The first compilation of Granth Sahib scripted by Bhai Gurdas under the guidance and supervision of Guru Arjan Dev was now with the family of Dhir Mal. Though a number of its copies were extant, but could not be considered authenticated. Guru Gobind Singh made an authenticated recension in which he also

added the compositions of Guru Tegh Bahadur. Three copies of this recension were made and one each sent to Akal Bunga at Amritsar, Keshgarh Sahib in Anandpur and Harmandir Sahib at Patna so that at each of the Takhts an authenticated copy of Guru Granth Sahib could be available.

Damdama, the Guru declared, would be the Kashi of the Sikhs, and earn fame for being a centre of learning. Hermeneutic lessons (santhya) of the Granth Sahib have since become the routine activity of that place.

Daya Singh and Dharam Singh who had to convey the Guru's letter *Zafarnamah* to Aurangzeb had some initial difficulty in



A rare Guru Granth Sahib manuscript at National Museum, New Delhi.

securing royal audience, but did succeed after some delay through the courtesy of the Emperor's daughter. The Emperor seemed to have been moved after reading the letter. The Guru's straightforwardness and undaunted frankness must have impressed him; so too the Guru's unshakeable faith in God and in Divine Justice. The Emperor was so touched that he dictated a letter for his Delhi minister Mu'in Khan asking him to befriend the Guru, invite him over, convey him the *farman*, send him to the royal presence, make money for travel expenses and a guide available to him. This letter was despatched through the Emperor's macebearer in the company of Daya Singh and

Dharam Singh. But before they could reach the Guru in Damdama Sahib, the Guru, on his own, had already left Southward in October 1706, may be, to meet the Emperor.

The Guru journeyed by way of Rajputana. Passing through Sirsa, Nauhar and Pushkar. Pushkar is a town marked by a natural lake which is an important pilgrim spot for the Hindus. Guru Gobind Singh on his way to the South halted here for some time. Chetan, the priest of the temple on the bank of the lake, observing the beautiful visage of the Guru's companions asked the Guru, "To what caste do these unshorn companions of yours belong?" The Guru replied, "These are the Khalsa who

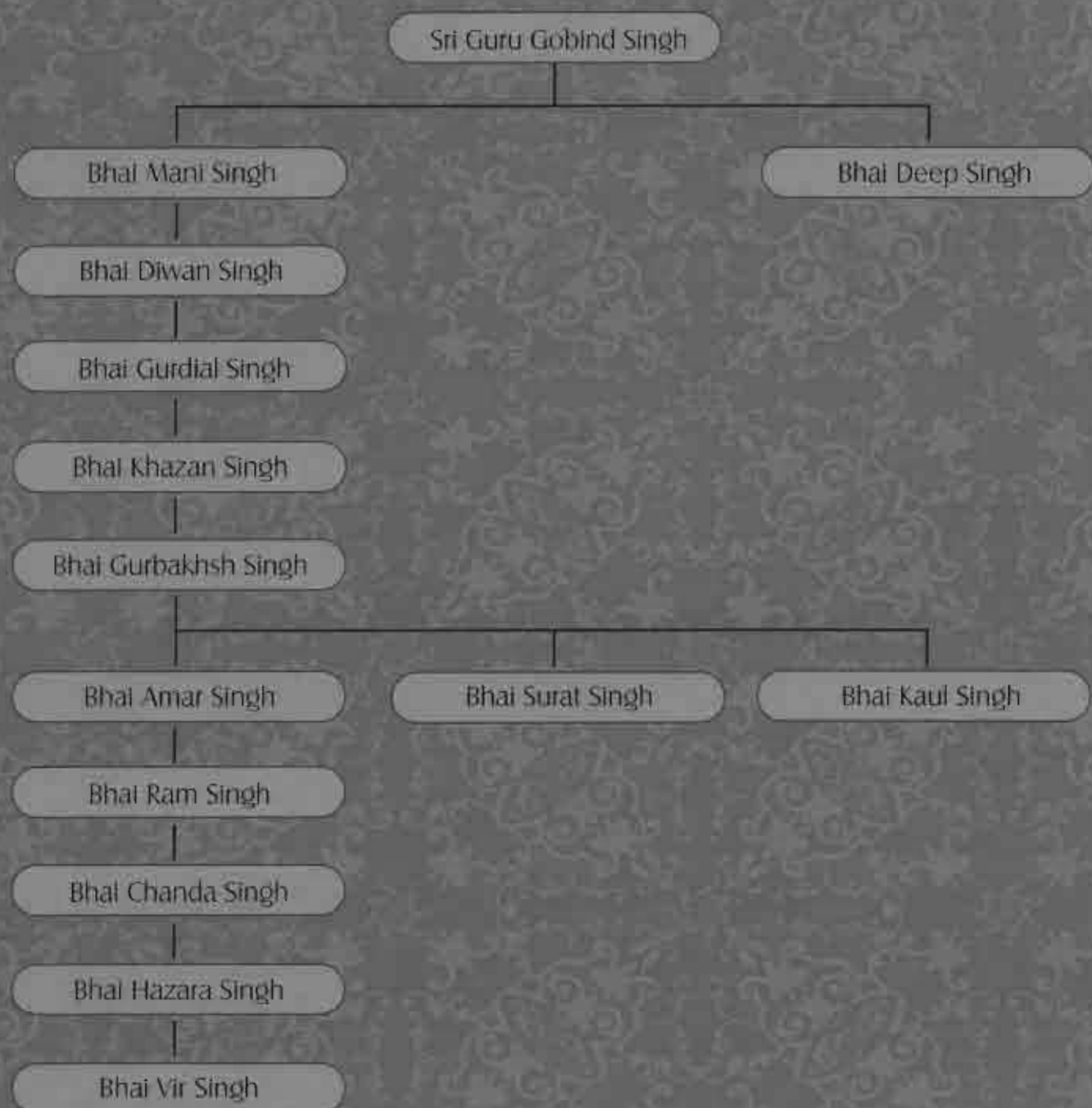
ਗੁਰਮੁਖਾ ਕੇ ਮੁਖ ਉਜਲੇ ਗੁਰ ਸਬਦੀ ਬੀਰਾਨਿ ॥

The faces of those turned God-wards are Pure
For they Reflect on the Guru's Word.



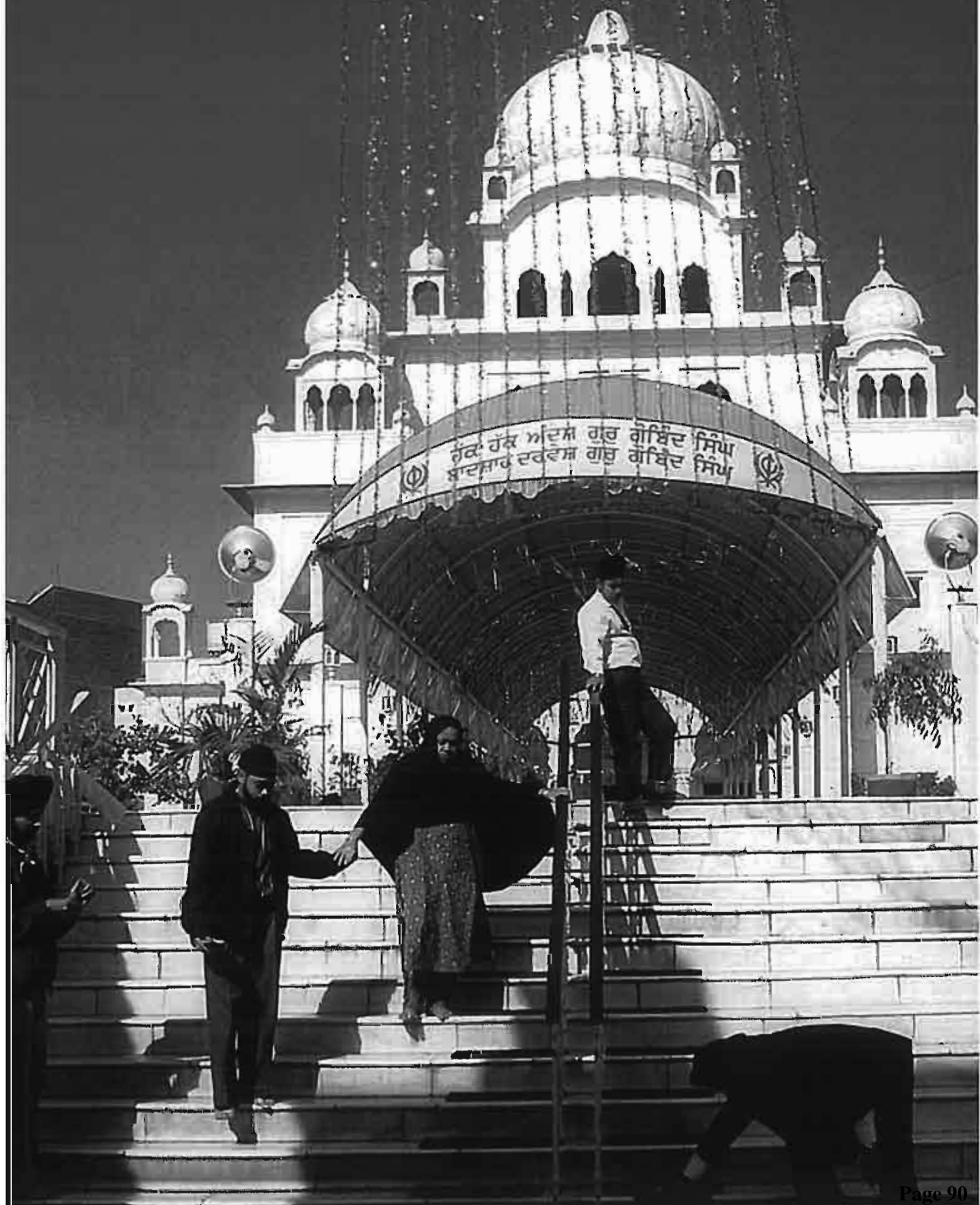


TRADITIONAL HERMANEUTICISTS THE GIANI LINEAGE



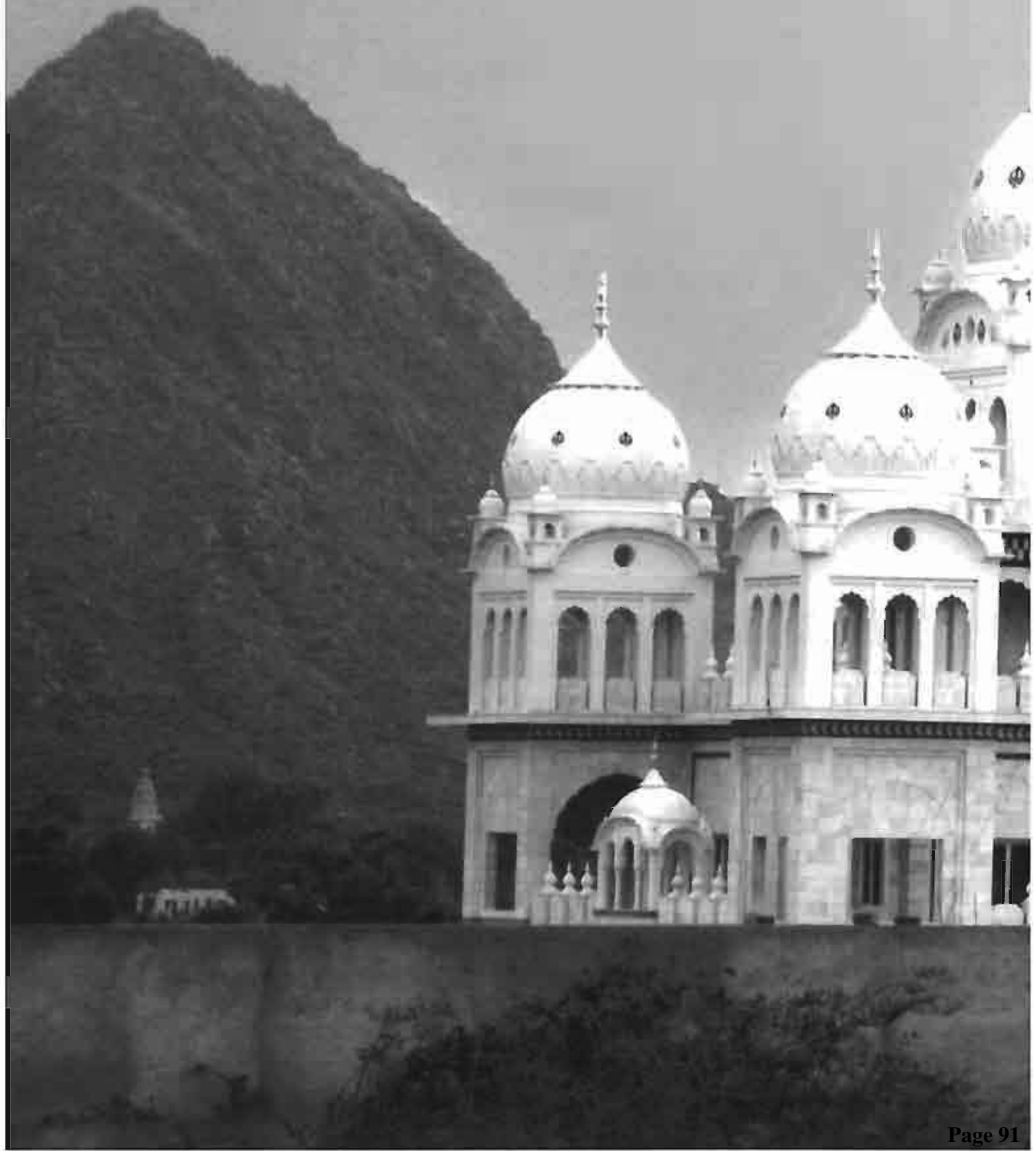
Gurdwara Moti Bagh, New Delhi

Guru Gobind Singh with his warriors had his camp here.
He shot an arrow to the Red Fort to inform the Prince of his arrival.
The prince took this for a miracle when a second arrow came from the
Guru with a note that it's a sheer skill in archery.



Gurdwara Singh Sabha, Pushkar, Rajasthan

Pushkar was visited by Guru Nanak Dev and Guru Gobind Singh. The shrine commemorating the former Guru's visit was earlier called Guru Nanak Dharmshala but is now known as Guru Singh Sabha. Guru Gobind Singh visited Pushkar during his travels in Rajputana in 1706.





belong to a third path quite distinct from the Hindu as well as the Islamic way."

On the bank of the lake stands a Gurdwara called *Gobind Ghat*. There is another Gurdwara at Pushkar, Sri Guru Singh Sabha, that has an impressive architectural design.

Then the Guru proceeded through Naraina and reached Baghaur where Daya Singh, returning from the South met him and acquainted him with what had transpired at his meeting with Aurangzeb.

However, by the end of February 1707



Gurdwara Thara Sahib Naraina, Rajasthan also known as Gurdwara Charan Kanwal Sahib. The Guru saluted the samadh of Dadu with his arrows to which the Sikhs took exception. They said that this was contrary to his own teachings which forbids the Sikhs to bow before idols, graves and samadhs. He explained that he had done it intentionally in order to test whether his Sikhs were vigilant enough to ensure strict rules of conduct. The Sikhs imposed fine on the Guru for this breach of religious discipline which the Guru readily paid.



Aurangzeb died in Aurangabad.

At Naraina, Jait Ram, a *mahant* met the Guru. The Guru asked him if there was possibility of securing help from Rajput princes to eliminate Mughal rule from the country. The *mahant* replied in the negative

saying that some of the Rajput princes had already submitted to the Mughals and were now fighting on their side and others were engaged in fighting against the Mughal forces. Yet, he said, "There is one Madho Das Bairagi, a Rajput from Panjab who has settled near Nanded on the bank of Godawari. Having lived in Maharashtra for many years, he knows very well the war tactics of the Marathas. He might be of use to you." It struck the Guru that this man might be the same as the one Lachhman Das of Paonta.

For a brief period in between, the Guru stayed in Delhi. At first, he stayed in a house behind Humayun's tomb where now Gurdwara *Damdama* Sahib stands. He soon left that house and out of love for the low-caste he shifted to the colony of cobblers known as *Mochi Bagh* or 'Park of Shoe-Makers'.

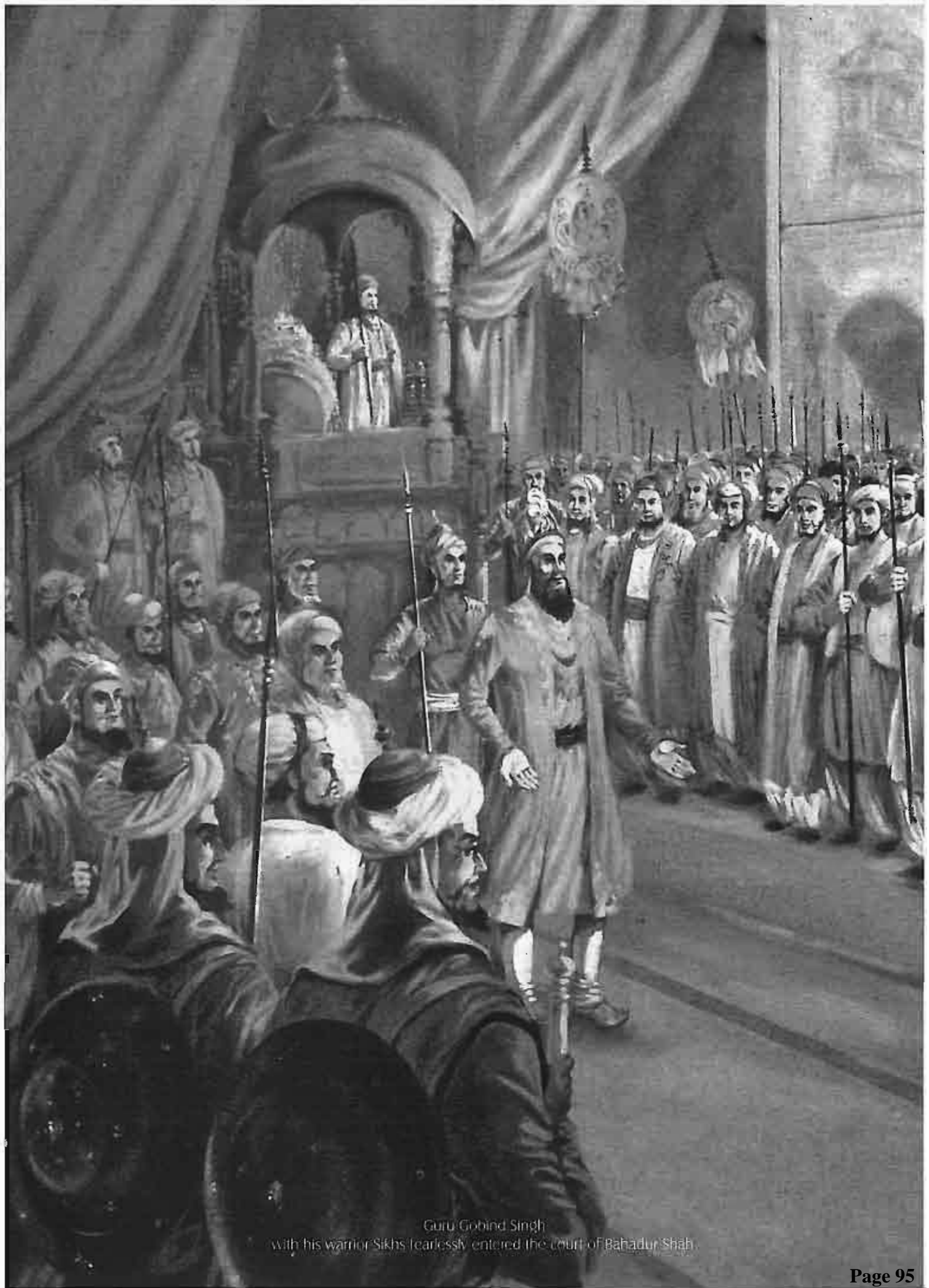
The Guru blessed that colony and gave it a new name, *Moti Bagh* or the 'Park of Pearls'. A spacious Gurdwara now stands at that place.

See-saw Relations with the Mughal Royalty

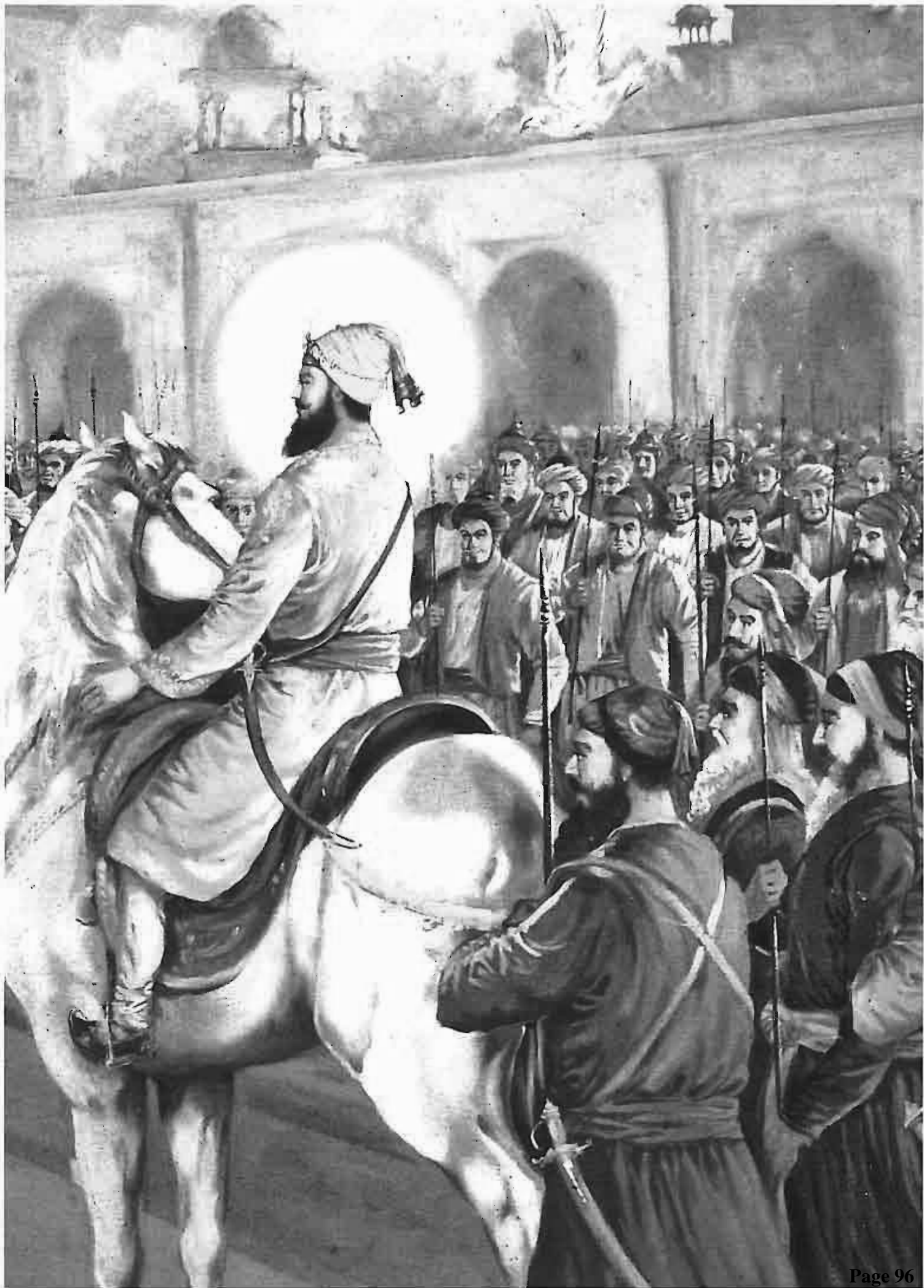
After the death of Aurangzeb, war of succession ensued between his sons. Bahadur Shah, the eldest, came rushing from Peshawar while Azam proclaimed himself Emperor in the Deccan. A battle was fought between them at Jajau near Agra. In this contest the Guru's sympathies were with Bahadur Shah. Azam was killed in the battle. When the arrow that killed him was pulled out, it was the gold tipped arrow of none other than Guru Gobind Singh. This drew the Guru closer to the new Emperor who invited him to Agra.

On July 23, 1707, the Guru and his Sikhs, all armed, left for the royal court. They were stopped at the gate of the Fort and asked to disarm themselves. The Guru declined to do so. The Emperor permitted them to attend the court with arms on. The Emperor presented the Guru with a robe of honour and several other valuable gifts. (Sainapat, *Sri Gur Sobha*, 121). The Guru sensed the possibility of ending the old differences with the Mughals. They had friendly discussions and the Guru thought there lay the possibility of peace and being able to assemble the whole body of the Khalsa once again.





Guru Gobind Singh
with his warrior Sikhs fearlessly entered the court of Bahadur Shah.







Gurdwara Guru Ka Taal, Agra, Uttar Pradesh
This historic Gurdwara dates back to 17th Century. It is built over the place where Guru Tegh Bahadur laid down his arms to offer arrest to Aurangzeb. Tal or reservoir had twelve towers of which eight still survive.

Facing Page:
Gurdwara Mai Than, Agra
It was the house of a devoted Sikh lady, Mai Jassi, who had long cherished a desire to see the Guru and present to him a length of cloth made from cotton yarn spun by her.

While in Agra, the Guru paid a visit to the Guru ka Taal set up in the memory of Guru Tegh Bahadur. He also paid a visit to honour a lady who had spun a length of cloth for the Guru. Her house, in her memory, became Gurudwara Mai Than

The Nawab of Sirhind had apprehended the Guru's proximity with the Emperor. He had already charged two trusted Pathans with the task of murdering the Guru.

While talks between the Guru and the Emperor were still in progress, Bahadur Shah moved to Rajputana to subdue Kachhvaas. Thence he moved on to the Deccan to suppress the insurrection of his brother Kam Bakhsh. The Guru accompanied him for his own purpose. At Burhanpur, by the River Tapti, the Guru camped some 9 km away from the imperial camp. The Guru met the Emperor and again tried to make him agree to hand over Wazir Khan to him, just as Jehangir

had handed over Chandu to his grandfather, Hargobind Sahib. However, he found no possibility of the Emperor agreeing to any of his proposals for the redressal of wrongs done. So, he broke off from the Emperor and moved towards Nanded in September, 1708.

Converting the Bairagi

Reaching Nanded, Guru Gobind Singh came upon a hermitry that belonged to a Bairagi Sadhu, Madho Das, who was known to possess great magical powers. He was not present in the hut at that time. The Guru made use of his couch to take rest for a while. As the Bairagi returned and saw someone else occupying his couch, he became furious and thought, he would really chastise that insolent visitor. But as soon as he set his eyes on the Guru, all his anger disappeared. The following dialogue took place between them:

Gurdwara Badli Sangat, Burhanpur
Guru Gobind Singh while traveling to the Deccan in company with
emperor Bahadur Shah stayed here.





Madho Das: Who are you?
 Guru Gobind Singh: He, whom you know.
 Madho Das: What do I know?
 Guru Gobind Singh:
 Think it over in your mind.
 Madho Das (after a pause):
 So you are Guru Gobind Singh.
 Guru Gobind Singh: Yes.
 Madho Das: What have you come here for?
 Guru Gobind Singh: To convert you
 into the discipline of mine.
 Madho Das: I submit, my Lord,
 I am a *Banda* (slave) of yours.

The Guru blessed Madho, gave him five arrows out of his quiver, and an escort of a few chosen Sikhs and directed him to go to the Panjab and carry the campaign against the cruel injustice of the Mughal rulers. Banda made for the Panjab, punished Wazir Khan, sacked Sirhind and shook the Mughal rule by his serial victories until he was overcome and made cap-

tive. The Mughal hordes took him to Delhi and put him to death in 1716. The Guru himself chose to stay on for some time in a spot on the bank of Godavari and in the outskirts of Nanded which had fascinated him.

Royal conspiracy to kill the Guru

The Emperor Bahadur Shah was much irked over the Guru having deputed Banda to the Panjab to renew the struggle there. He also apprehended that the Guru might join hands with the Marathas in their anti-Mughal struggle while he (the Emperor) himself was engaged in warfare against his brother Karim Baksh in Hyderabad. That is why he kept staying at Nanded so that he should be able to keep an eye on the Guru. The Emperor seemed to misbelieve that the Guru's death would cause a fatal blow to Banda's renewed struggle in Panjab. He knew about the two Pathans deputed by Wazir Khan to kill the Guru and who, tracking the Guru, had reached Nanded.



Banda Singh Bahadur (1670-1716)

Born in 1670, Banda was given the name Lachhman Dev at birth by his father. When he attained the age of fifteen, the sight of a dying dove during a chase touched his tender heart and he turned an ascetic. He received instruction in religious lore and Yoga from many a master. One of them gave him the name Madho Das. Roaming around for some years he eventually established his own *math* (monastery) at Nanded on the left bank of River Godavri. There, in 1708, he had an encounter with Guru Gobind Singh. Following only a brief dialogue, he surrendered before the Guru as his *Banda* (slave).

The Guru took him to his camp, administered him the baptism of steel, and gave him the name Banda Singh. Thereafter, the Guru bestowed upon him a banner, a drum and five arrows as emblem of authority. Then he was instructed to proceed to Panjab to chastise tyrannical Mughal rulers there. The Guru deputed five of his Sikhs to accompany him.

When Banda Singh reached Panjab under the Guru's mandate, Sikhs began to rally round his standard. Material help came from the ancestors of the Phulkian princes.

In 1709, Banda attacked Samana, the native town of the executioner of Guru Tegh Bahadur, as also of the executioners of Guru Gobind Singh's younger sons. After conquering Samana and several other small towns, he attacked and conquered Sadhaura, the chief of which place had tortured Pir Buddhu Shah to death.

As more Sikh contingents came to join him, he turned toward Sirhind where Wazir Khan, the governor who had ordered the Guru's young princes to be walled alive to death, got killed in the battle. Banda Singh,

after capturing the city, appointed Baj Singh, one of his companions, as Governor of Sirhind. It was the first time, that the Sikhs had started acquiring territories. Banda Singh was now the virtual master of the land between Yamuna and Sutlej. He then had a coin struck, not in his own name, but that of Guru Nanak and of Guru Gobind Singh.

He crossed Yamuna and seized Saharanpur, but soon returned to Panjab. There, subjugating Batala and Kalanaur, he turned to Lahore where the terrified governor shut himself up in his fort. Much of Majha and Riarki soon came into his hands.

Banda's conquests roused the ire of the Mughal Emperor, Bahadur Shah, who in 1710, issued an edict to his *faujdar*s that 'worshippers of Nanak, wherever found be put to death.' The next Emperor, Farukh Siyar even outdid Bahadur Shah in his zeal to eradicate Sikhs. Banda first retired to his fort in the Himalayan hills, but he had to come down to the plains. The Mughal forces then rounded him up in Gurdas Nangal, around which a terrible siege was laid. The siege continued for eight months. After that long, Banda and his famished companions were captured. They were first paraded in Lahore and later in Delhi. Altogether there were 740 prisoners in chains and over two thousand heads of Sikhs stuck upon pikes.

Banda and his companions were given choice between accepting Islam and death. They all chose the latter and so were tormented to death. Banda Singh was given the harshest torments. His eye-balls were pulled out, his limbs chopped off and his flesh pierced with red hot pincers. He braved all that, but his already famished frame eventually gave in and he passed away on July 9, 1716.



Guru Gobind Singh meeting Madho Das Bairaagi, (later known as Banda Singh Bahadur) in 1708.

He decided to patronize them in their plot. He also prevailed upon them to expedite the work.

The two Pathans – Gull Khan and Ataullah Khan – became frequent visitors to the Guru's camp. They regularly attended the Guru's sermons and appeared to evince keen interest in his teachings. They also won the confidence of the Sikhs close to the Guru by their apparently suave and gentle manners.

One evening, after the Rehras service, the

Guru retired in his tent all by himself. He lay almost half asleep. The Pathans quietly stole into his chamber and one of them, Gul Khan (whom the Emperor had already given the title Jamshed Khan as a token of his patronage), plunged his dagger into the left side of the chest of the Guru. The Guru seized the assailant and killed him on the spot. Ataullah, his companion, tried to run away but was killed by the Sikhs who rushed towards the Guru's tent on hearing

the clatter. That the Emperor was part of the conspiracy is borne out further by the fact that he granted a *khil'at* to the Pathan's son along with compensation for losing his father.

A *jerrah* (surgeon) from the imperial camp, whom the Guru knew, was immediately sent for. The surgeon rushed expeditiously and carefully stitched the wound and applied the required medicament to it. The Guru began to recover under his careful care. The Emperor daily sent his emissaries to enquire after the Guru's condition. That the Guru was speedily recovering caused him dismay.

He then decided to adopt a crafty device to contrive the Guru's death in such a way that his complicity should never be discovered. He knew the Guru's weakness for bows and arrows. So he sent two strong and ornamentally decked bows along with many rich presents. His emissary praised the bows and tried to

persuade the Guru to try them. A few Sikhs tried to wield the bows, but could not bend them. The Guru was incensed. He got up and bent the bow. But in so doing the stitches of his still raw wound gave way and blood gushed out in profusion. Thus was Guru Gobind Singh martyred at the hands of a royal conspiracy.

Journey to the Yond

The Guru could sense that his end was near. He called up his Sikhs in the camp to assemble and reminded them that the Will of God must be accepted cheerfully. He further said, "Know that wherever five Sikhs would assemble, whether to take guidance from the holy book, I shall be in the midst of them".

In the morning, he took his bath, recited *Japu ji* and said his *Ardas*. The Holy Book was then installed ceremoniously as desired by the Guru. The Guru bowed before it and declared it



as his successor. With this obeisance of his, Granth Sahib became *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, the 'Eternal Living Guru' for the Sikhs. Thus, the lineage of human Gurus was brought to end.

Narbud Singh Bhatt was with the Guru at that time in Nanded. He in his *Bhatt Vahi Talauda Pragnah Jind* made an entry about that function of the Guru. The following is the translation of that entry:

Guru Gobind Singh, the Tenth Master, son of Guru Tegh Bahadur, grandson of Guru Hargobind, great – grandson of Guru Arjan, of the family of Guru Ram Das, Surajbansi, Gosal clan, Sodhi Khatri, resident of Anandpur, pragnah Kahlur, now at Nanded, in the Godavari country, in the Deccan, asked Bhai Daya Singh, on Wednesday, October 6, 1708, to fetch Sri Granth Sahib. In obedience to his orders, Daya Singh brought Sri Granth Sahib. The Guru placed before it five pice and a

coconut and bowed his head before it. He said to the congregation, "It is my commandment: Look upon Granth ji in my place. He who acknowledges it will obtain his reward. The Guru will rescue him. Know this as the truth."

Having thus enthroned the Holy Granth Sahib as the perpetual Guru after him, the Guru commenced his journey to the yond on October 7, 1708 (Hari Ram Gupta i. p. 329).

Epilogue

Guru Nanak, the Founder of the Sikh Faith had been most distressed that his countrymen had developed intense demoralization and deep-rooted slave mentality. So much so that they had been slaves even of a whole dynasty of slaves. He wanted to transform them into men of undaunted spirit and hallowed optimism (*Charhdi Kala*). Such a transformation was not possible without unwavering faith in God who alone is the source of resolute courage and moral rectitude. The Guru planned to create a nation of men who should be emblems of holiness on the one hand and unflinching determination on the other. It was not a task that could be achieved in one generation. That is why his mission continued down a line of nine spiritually vigorous successors who were also role models of undaunted courage themselves. That mission came to completion with the creation of the *Khalsa*. Hence there was no more need for appointing any individual as successor. The spiritual aspect of the Guru's pontificate was therefore passed on by Guru Gobind Singh to the *holy Word* preserved in *Guru Granth Sahib*, and the temporal aspect to the *Khalsa*, who came to be designated as *Guru Panth*.

The twin flags, one relating to the *Harmandir Sahib* and the other, to the *Akal Takht* at Amritsar, represent the suzerainty of the *Guru Granth* and the *Guru Panth* respectively. The superb spiritcraft of Guru Gobind Singh brought about pragmatic synthesis of the two in the form of a new nation. With that Guru Nanak's mission came to the desired culmination and so, the lineage of human Gurus was ended.



APPENDIX I

Nishans, Relics And Hukamnamas

Guru Gobind Singh often gave *Nishan* of his blessings to those who served him or gave him support and protection during his hard days. Such *Nishans* have been reverently preserved by the families of those who were lucky to receive them. Outstanding among such autographs have been the ones granted to Rai Kalha, Ghani Khan and Nabi Khan, and to the Pundit of Pushkar.

The relics include articles of the Guru's personal use that certain families have come to possess, or have been preserved at a *Takht*, a Gurdwara or in some museum. Hundreds of such relics are known to be extant.

Hukamnamas are the written orders addressed by the Guru to *sangats* or individuals of various places. Thirty four of these have been identified so far. Thirty three were reported by Dr. Ganda Singh and commented upon by Dr. Loehlin. Ajit Singh Bagha brought to light one more.

Most of these were sent through emissaries during the time of *Dharam yudh* and embody requests for financial help, or for arms, horses or able-bodied daring young men to supplement his fighting force. The purpose of some Hukam Namas was to invite *sangats* on such festive days as Divali and Holi. Invitation for Baisakhi festival was carried by only one out of these thirty four. More than half of the *Hukamnamas* contained an admonition for the devotees against making over their offerings to any *masand*. They may either present them in person or send them through a trusted representative of theirs.

These *Hukamnamas* were generally dictated by the Guru. In order to authenticate them, he inscribed an insignia or formula in his own handwriting at the top of the Hukam Nama. One such peculiar mark contained the drawing of one or two daggers, below

which there were two short perpendicular lines. To the right of the daggers were put two dots and only one to their left. Under the perpendicular lines occurred the digit '1' beneath which one or a couple of Persian letters indicating *sahi* i.e. 'correct' and below it was one more large number '1' signifying the One Supreme Lord. This was followed by one or two more *sahi* signs and a dot' followed by two horizontal lines and a brief insinuated substance of the Hukam Nama – for example, in the formulation 1)s bh, 1 stands for one *tola*, s for *sona* (gold) and bh for *bhejo*(=send). So it stands for "send one *tola* (=12.5gm) of gold".

Most *Hukamnamas* bore dates. In some cases even number of lines and number of words were written in order to check tampering.

There is considerable historical importance of these *Hukamnamas*. They give us information about the condition of various *sangats*. Great love and esteem were bestowed upon them by the Guru. The *sangats* too received these *Hukamnamas* with loving adoration and profound veneration. The *sangats* were identified by their locale and the Sikhs were addressed by their names. The Guru called them his *Khalsa*, i.e. 'his very own' with great delight.

The *sangats* were instructed to preserve unity and goodwill. They were advised to avoid factions and differences. Instructions were also given for meditating on the Gurus' name, regularly conducting religious assemblies, and maintaining well-run *langars*.

The *sangats* were emphatically instructed not to give offerings to the *masands*, but to bring them personally and present them to the Guru. Whoever was unable to come was advised to keep the offering and send when the Guru asked for it.

APPENDIX II

Sikh Heroes following Guru Gobind Singh

Guru Gobind Singh's ideology inspired thousands of Sikhs whose martyrdom set jewels in Sikh history. We here remind ourselves of the contribution of some of these heroes.

Baba Deep Singh (1682-1757)

He got initiated by Guru Gobind Singh and prepared four copies of that recension of *Guru Granth Sahib* which had been prepared by Bhai Mani Singh under the supervision of Guru Gobind Singh. In 1757, a huge army of Afghans raided Amritsar, demolished the Ram Rauni fortress and filled up the holy sarovar with debris. As this distressing news reached Baba Deep Singh, he left his academic and missionary activities and set out with his *Jatha* and fought the invaders embracing martyrdom near Ramsar. A legend has grown that he continued fighting even after his head had been severed.

Nawab Kapur Singh (1697-1753)

He was initiated into the Order of the *Khalsa* under the guidance of Bhai Mani Singh in 1721. In 1733, Zakaria Khan the Governor of Panjab offered the Sikhs a *jagir* signifying subnationhood for them. The title of Nawab was unanimously conferred upon Kapur Singh by the Sikh leaders who had received the offer. In 1734, he was chosen as the overall leader of *Dal Khalsa*, the Sikh army, whose youth wing (*Taruna Dal*) was led by Jassa Singh Ahluwalia. When the Sikhs realised that accepting the *jagir* was a mistake, Kapur Singh gave up his *Nawabi* and provided remarkable leadership to the Sikh nation. He passed away in 1753.

Jassa Singh Ahluwalia (1718-1783)

He was born in village Ahlu on account of which he began to be called Ahluwalia. He lost his father when he was only five. He was

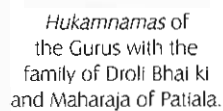
brought up by Mata Sundri, wife of Guru Gobind Singh and spent his childhood in Delhi. At eleven, he joined Kapur Singh (later, Nawab) and participated in every activity in which Kapur Singh was involved. In 1748 his *Jatha* turned into Ahluwalia *Misl*. In 1754, Jassa Singh became the chief of *Taruna Dal* (the youth wing) of the *Dal Khalsa*. He fought against Ahmad Shah Durrani several times and rescued thousands of young Hindu women whom Durrani was abducting and making captive. In 1761, his army captured Lahore and he was proclaimed *Sultan-ul-Qaum* (Emperor of the Nation).

Baba Baghel Singh (d.1802)

He was one of the outstanding leaders of the Sikh army. After capturing many a territory in Panjab and also across Yamuna, he, along with Baba Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, raided Delhi in 1783 and entered the Red Fort. He occupied the *Divan-i-Aam* and hoisted the Sikh flag there. Shah Aalam, the Emperor, made truce with the Sikh generals by letting them stay in Delhi to build historic shrines on sites that had been sanctified by visits of the Sikh Gurus. To cover the expenses of construction of these shrines, he offered the Sikhs 37.5% of the octroi of Delhi.

Jassa Singh Ramgarhia (1723-1803)

He fought against the army of Nadir Shah and was the major participant in the battle of Ram Rauni, the fortress near Amritsar. His *jatha* came to be known as the Ramgarhia *Misl* and he was given charge of the Ram Rauni fortress which had been rebuilt. He was among the generals who, in 1783, captured Delhi. He was responsible for getting Gurdwaras Sis Ganj and Rakab Ganj constructed. In 1784, he returned to the Panjab and not only recaptured his territory, but also extended it considerably.

[illegible]

१४३
 श्रीगुरुजीके नाम से प्रार्थना करता हूँ
 कि मेरी प्रार्थना को आप सुन लें
 और मेरी समस्याओं का समाधान करें
 मैं आपका भक्त हूँ
 श्रीगुरुजी

ਸਿਰੀਸੁਰੁ ਜੀਉਕੀਆਹਿਅੰਤੈਤੁਲੀਤੰ
ਕਾਰਾਭਾਰਸਾ ਸਰਬਤੁਸੰਗਤਕੁਰੁਚਖੈ
ਤੁਧੁਜਮੀਅਰਲੈਕੈਅਸਭੈਹੁਰੁ
ਵਦਾ ਸੋਰੇਰੇਥਪਰਿਬਹੁਤੁਧੁਮੀ
ਤੋਰੁਪਰੁਮੇਰਹੈਤੁਧੁਹਰੁਕੁਦਖਦਿਆ
ਛੋਤੀਅਸਭੈਹੁਰੁਕਾਵਦਾਤੋਰੁ
ਪਰੁਮੇਰਾਅਸੈਤੁਧੁਸਿਤਖੀ
ਹੁਰੁਕੁਦਖਦਿਆਤੀਅਦਵਾ
ਮੁਸੰਅਸਵਰਲੈਕੈਅਦਵਾਜਹੁਰੁ
ਅਦਵਾਤੋਰੁਉਤੈਅਸਭੈਪਗੀਮਿਹ
ਵਨਗੀਅਸੈਤੋਅਦਵਾਇਕੁ
ਜਤਕਰੇਗੀਅਦਵਾਕੁਦਵਸਾਨੁਪ



The priest at
Pushkar displaying
hukamnama in
Guru Gobind Singh's
own hand.





Jassa Singh Ahluwalia

Opposite page:
Baba Baghel Singh



ਨ ਡਰੋ ਅਰਿ ਸੇ ਜਬ ਜਾਇ ਲਰੇ.
ਨਿਸਚੈ ਕਰਿ ਅਪੁਨੀ ਜੀਤ ਕਰੇ।

I should have no fear of the enemy When I go to battle,
And turn victory convincingly to my side.

Banda Bahadur In the Panjab.



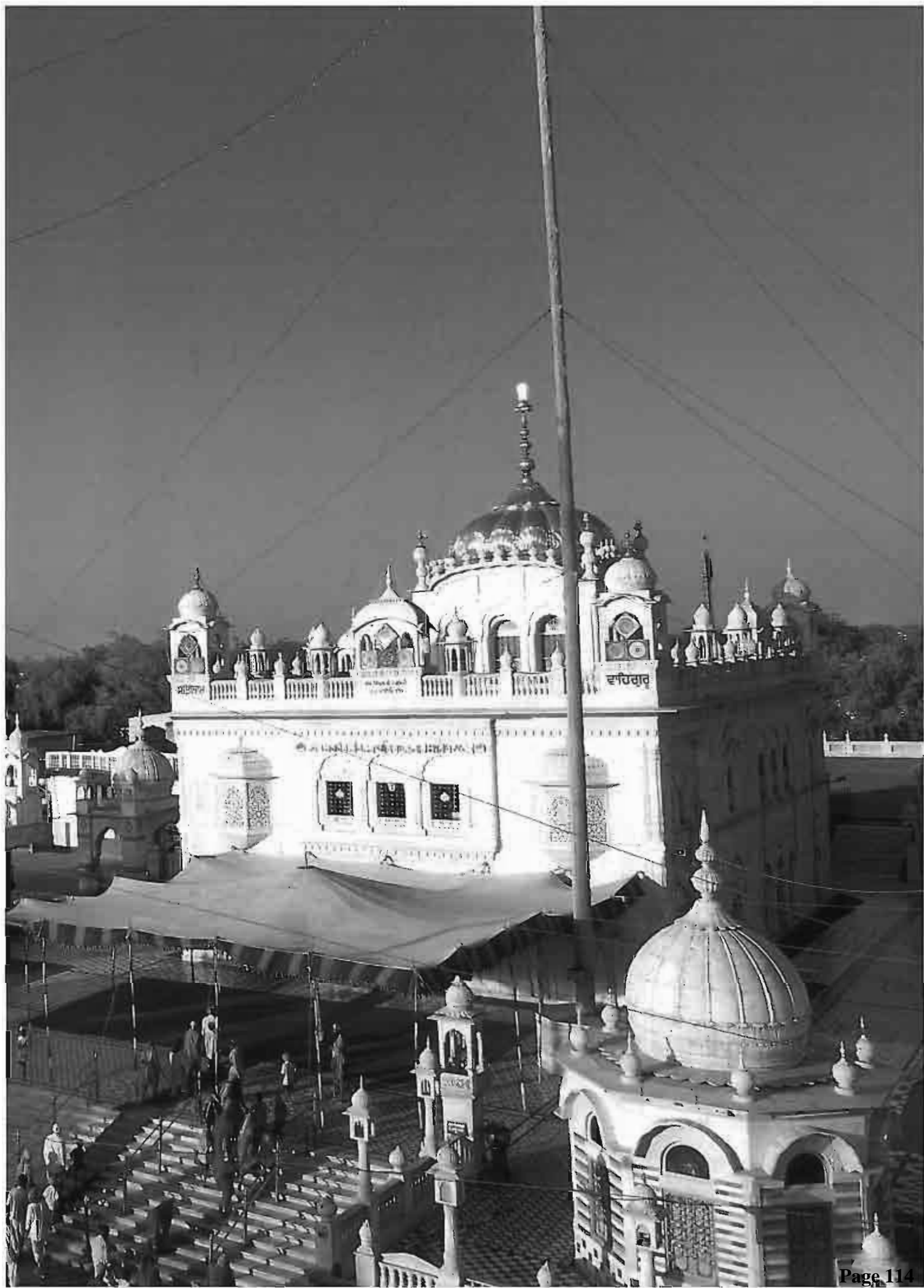
Ram Singh

ਅਵਿਚਲ ਨਗਰੁ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਗੁਰੂ ਕਾ ਨਾਮੁ ਜਪਤ ਸੁਖੁ ਪਾਇਆ ਰਾਮ ॥

Itamar is the City of my Guru, my God - Contemplating the Lord the Lord's Name I have attained Bliss

Takht Sri Hazur Sahib, Nanded





G L O S S A R Y

- Akal** beyond time; immortal.
Amrit nectar, ambrosia, elixir of life.
Ardas supplication, supplicatory prayer.
Avatar incarnation.
Bairagi recluse, hermit.
Banda slave.
Bandai Khalsa the followers of Banda Bahadur.
Bhagvati/Bhagauti goddess Durga.
Bharam superstition.
Braj a dialect spoken in and around Mathura.
Charhdi kala high morale, spiritual optimism.
Damdama a resting place.
Dharam religion; creed; duty; belief.
Domala a cockade worn over a turban.
Durga a Hindu goddess of Power, Shiva's consort.
Durga Poojan propitiatory worship of Durga.
Fateh conquest, victory.
Fauj army.
Garhi fortified house.
Ghat wharf, quay, landing place on the river bank.
Granth book, especially sacred book.
Gurmukhi the script for the Panjabi language.
Guru Sikh spiritual Master.
Janam birth
Jiziya a tax levied by some Muslim rulers over Hindus.
Kachhehra underwear shorts.
Kangan bracelet, bangle.
Kangha comb.
Kara bangle.
Karam action, occupation, business.
Kesh hair (unshorn).
Khalsa Commonwealth of baptised Sikhs.
Kirpan curved sword, sabre.
Ladli fauj pampered army.
Majha central Panjab
Mukte emancipated ones.
Nihang a sect of baptised Sikhs.
Panj five.
Piyare loved ones.
Pir Muslim holy man.
Pothi book, especially holy book.
Pundit a Brahmin scholar.
Qazi Muslim judge/magistrate.
Ranghreta a Sikh Convert
Sangat religious congregation
Santhya lesson, expository training.
Sarb loh all steel.
Singh lion.
Subadar governor of a state.
Takht Lit. throne, seat of ecclesiastical and temporal authority.
Waheguru Sikh name of the Ultimate Reality, God.
Zafarnamah Lit. Epistle of Victory. A letter in Persian verse by Guru Gobind Singh addressed to Emperor Aurangzeb.

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